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THE WORKS OF

The late Reverend

JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

Rector of Weston-Favell, in Northamptonshire.

IN SIX VOLUMES.

VOLUME I.

CONTAINING,

MEDITATIONS among the TOMBS;
REFLECTIONS on a FLOWER-GARDEN;
A DESCANT upon CREATION;
CONTEMPLATIONS on the NIGHT;
CONTEMPLATIONS on the STARRY HEAVENS; *and*
A WINTER-PIECE.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A particular ACCOUNT of the LIFE, CHARACTER, and WRITINGS of the AUTHOR.

I will meditate of all thy works, and talk of thy doings.
Psal. lxxvii. 12.

EDINBURGH:

Printed for JAMES ROCH, the Publisher, and sold by him, at his Shop Luckenbooths, and by the principal Booksellers in Great Britain.

M DCC LXXIX.

ADVERTISEMENT.

AS the writings of the great and good Mr HERVEY have been held in the greateſt eſteem by all the friends of real Chriſtianity; and the demand for them, even in detached pieces, has been very conſiderable; the preſent editor was adviſed to collect them into ſix volumes, and give an elegant and accurate edition of the whole. And he flatters himſelf, that this impreſſion, in regard to the ſize and elegance of the types, the quality of the paper, and the manner of execution, will be found far ſuperior to that of any of the different pieces hitherto publiſhed, either in London, Scotland, or Ireland.

The MEDITATIONS, and THERON and ASPASIO, are printed from copies that received the author's laſt corrections and improvements, a little before his happy death. Theſe corrections and improvements are ſo very conſiderable and important, that if any reader will be at the pains to compare this edition of theſe pieces with any copies printed in London, previous to the year 1760, he will find not only many ſentences added, but vaſt improvements, both in diction and ſentiment, made in the *Meditations;* and in *Theron and Aſpaſio*, not only very conſiderable amendments made, but in many places whole pages added, both in the text and notes. So that the preſent edition will be found greatly preferable, in all reſpects, to any that hath hitherto appeared.

The other pieces are printed from the beſt London editions; Mr Hervey's recommendatory prefaces to ſeveral other works are now collected; ſeveral of his religious letters do now appear; and the whole are arranged conformably to their dates, as far as could be done. The Index is copious and entirely new.

To the whole is prefixed a particular account of the life, character, and writings of the author; chiefly taken from the account of his life prefixed to the two volumes of his letters publiſhed in 1760. Several other anecdotes concerning him, will be given in the preface to his letters in this edition.

Upon the whole, as the editor has ſpared no pains or expence for giving a beautiful and correct edition of the works of the truly evangelical and pious Mr HERVEY, he cannot but think his labours will meet with the public approbation, as he is duly ſenſible of the encouragement already given him.

J. ROCH.

June,
1779.

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N. B. *It may seem unaccountable to an* unlearned *reader, that astronomers should speak such amazing things; and speak them with such an air of* assurance *; concerning the distances and magnitudes, the motions and relations, of the heavenly bodies. I would desire such a person to consider the case of* ECLIPSES, *and with what* exactness *they are calculated. They are not only foretold, but the very instant of their* beginning *is determined. The precise time of their* continuance *is assigned; assigned, almost to the* nicety *of a moment; and what is still more surprising, for the space of* hundreds *or* thousands *of years to come.—As this is a matter of fact, absolutely indisputable; it is also a very obvious, yet solid demonstration, that the principles of science, on which those calculations proceed, are not mere conjecture, or precarious supposition; but have a* real, *a* certain *foundation, in the nature and constitution of things.*

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THE

LIFE

OF THE REVEREND

JAMES HERVEY, A. M.

A Regard to eminent writings, which diſplay genius, learning, orthodoxy, and piety, naturally excites a deſire to be acquainted with the writer; and this deſire is the ſtronger, when theſe writings are not only truly excellent in themſelves, but are univerſally admired, eagerly read by good people of all denominations, and calculated to promote the beſt intereſts of mankind. Hence one is fond to know the author in private life, how he ſpent his time, how he ſuſtained his character as a public teacher of religion, what influence the doctrines of grace, which he ſo warmly inculcated on others, had on his own heart and converſation; and, finally, how he cloſed the laſt ſcene. Abundant ſatisfaction, as to all thoſe particulars, will be obtained from the following account.

Mr JAMES HERVEY was born on Friday the 26th of February 1713-14, at Hardingſtone, a country-village, one mile from Northampton; his father being then miniſter of the pariſh of Collingtree, within two miles of Hardingſtone. His firſt inſtruction was from his mother, who taught him his letters, and to read. Under her tuition he continued till he was ſeven years of age; when he was ſent, as a day-ſcholar, to the free grammar-ſchool at Northampton, of which the Rev. Mr Clarke, Vicar of St Sepulchre's, in the ſaid town, was at that time maſter.

At this ſchool he remained till he was ſeventeen years old, and learned the Latin and Greek languages; in which

his

his genius and memory would have enabled him to have made a much earlier progress, if it had not been prevented by his schoolmaster, who would not suffer him, or any other of his scholars, to learn faster than his own son. Whilst Mr Hervey was at school, though he shewed a remarkable dexterity at all the innocent games usual among children; yet he had a perfect indifference for the acquisitions he made by his skill in these games, which he practised only for exercise and amusement.

In the year 1731, at the age of seventeen, he was sent by his father to the university of Oxford, and entered of Lincoln college there, under the tuition of the Rev. Mr Hutchins, now Doctor, and Rector of that college. He resided in the university seven years, and took the degree of Bachelor of Arts. The first two or three years were spent by him with some degree of indolence, or rather less application to his studies than he afterwards used. But in 1733, about his nineteenth year, becoming acquainted with some persons, who began to distinguish themselves by their serious impressions of religion, and their zeal for the promotion of it, he was engaged, by their influence, in a stricter attachment both to piety and learning. He made himself master of Dr James Keill's Anatomy, Dr Derham's Physico-theology and Astro-theology, the *Spectacle de la Nature* [Nature displayed,] as translated by Mr Humphreys; which last work he read with a peculiar satisfaction. Nor was he less delighted by the *Essay on Pope's Odyssey*, written by the Rev. Mr Spence, now Prebendary of Durham; to which elegant and judicious discourse Mr Hervey often acknowledged that he owed more of his improvement in style and composition, than to any other which he had ever read.

In 1734, at the persuasion of a much-valued friend, he began to learn the Hebrew language without any teacher, by the Westminster grammar itself; but soon found that grammar too concise and difficult for the instruction of a learner; and therefore then despaired of ever attaining a competent knowledge in the Hebrew, though he afterwards made himself so thorough a master of that sacred language.

It

It appears from his letters to his ſiſter in 1733 and 1734, that though he then ſhewed a pious and ſerious turn; yet theſe letters either ſpeak a language different from free grace, for which we find he was afterwards ſo powerful an advocate, or at leaſt they treat very confuſedly of it. The truth is, he was then a ſtranger to, and had ſtrong propoſſeſſions againſt the doctrine of juſtification by faith in imputed righteouſneſs. And he acknowledges, in a note on his Deſcant upon Creation, that Mr Jenks's excellent treatiſe, entitled, *Submiſſion to the righteouſneſs of God*, was the inſtrument of removing his prejudices, and reducing him to a better judgment *.

He entered into holy orders, as ſoon as his age, and the canons of the church, would allow. And tho' the preciſe time of his taking orders cannot be aſcertained, yet it appears to have been in the end of 1736 or beginning of 1737; at leaſt, it appears from one of his letters, that he had a curacy in the beginning of the latter year. Whilſt he was at Oxford, he had a ſmall exhibition of about 20 l. a-year; and when he was ordained, his father preſſed him very much to take ſome curacy, in or near Oxford, and to hold his exhibition: but this he would by no means comply with, thinking it an injuſtice to detain it, after he was in orders, from another perſon, who might more want the benefit of that proviſion. On his leaving Oxford in 1736, he went to his father, and became his curate. He afterwards went to London; and, after ſtaying ſome time there, became curate at Dummer. Here he continued about twelve months; and, upon his leaving that curacy, in the year 1738, he was invited and went to Stoke-Abbey, in Devonſhire, the ſeat of his worthy friend, the late Paul Orchard, Eſq; Here he lived upwards of two years, in great eſteem and friendſhip with that worthy gentleman, who valued him very

* This excellent treatiſe, entitled, *Submiſſion to the righteouſneſs of God; or, The neceſſity of truſting to a better righteouſneſs than our own*, with Mr Hervey's recommendation prefixed, may be had of the publiſhers of this work, at the ſmall price of 8 d. bound.

very much for his piety. A remarkable proof of the great regard he had for him on that account, he shewed on the following occasion: When his eldest son, the present Paul Orchard, Esq; to whom the second volume of his Meditations is dedicated, was to be baptized, he insisted that Mr Hervey should be one of his godfathers, that he might have an eye to his Christian education; and this he did in preference to many gentlemen of large estates in that neighbourhood, who would have thought themselves honoured to have stood sponsors for Mr Orchard's son.

In the year 1740, he undertook the curacy of Biddeford, fourteen miles from Stoke-Abbey, where he lived greatly beloved by his people. His congregation was large, tho' his stipend was small: his friends, therefore, made a collection yearly for him, which raised his income to 60 l. *per annum*, so highly did they esteem him. At Biddeford he was curate, about two years and a half, and remained so until there was a new rector of that church, who dismissed Mr Hervey from his curacy, against the united requests of his parishioners, who offered to maintain him at their own expence. During the time that Mr Hervey lived in the west, viz. from 1738, till the latter end of 1743, his family heard very little of him, by reason of the great distance he was from them; tho' he laboured diligently in the service of his Master. Here it was that he planned his *Meditations*, and probably wrote some part of them. He says in his first volume of *Meditations*, that it was on a ride to Kilkhampton, in Cornwall, that he went into the church, where he lays the scene of his *Meditations among the tombs*.

In August 1743, or thereabouts, he returned from Biddeford to Weston-Favel, leaving behind him many disconsolate friends, and officiated as curate to his father. Here he paid the greatest attention to his duty, and faithfully preached the gospel of Christ.

The first of his writings which raised the attention of the public, was his *Meditations among the tombs*, *Reflections on a flower-garden*, and *a Descant on creation*, published in February 1745-6. Of this kind of writing we had before an exam-

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ple from no leſs a man than the great philoſopher Mr Boyle *, in his *Occaſional reflections on ſeveral ſubjects*, written in his younger years.

Mr Hervey's performance was ſo well received by the public, that it has already paſſed thro' about twenty editions in London, beſides many ſurreptitious ones in Scotland and Ireland. A ſecond volume, containing *Contemplations on the night and ſtarry heavens*, and, *A winter-piece*, was publiſhed in December 1747 †.

In June 1750, his health being much impaired by his great attention to duty, and his family and friends judging that the change of air might be of benefit to him, they formed a deſign, which they executed, of conveying him to London, under a pretence of his riding a few miles in a friend's poſt-chaiſe, who was going thither, and of which he pleaſantly complains in a letter, dated June 28. 1750, to a friend upon his arrival there.

He ſtaid in London until April or May 1752, during which time he was viſited with a ſevere ſickneſs, which had well nigh put a period to his painful life. But he recovered; and, upon his father's death in 1752, he returned to Weſton, where he conſtantly reſided till his death.

Mr Hervey took his degree of Maſter of Arts, at Cambridge,

* See Boyle's Life, by the late Dr Birch.

† There are few books in the Engliſh language, which in ſo ſhort a time have ever paſſed thro' ſuch numerous and very large editions, as Mr Hervey's Meditations; which not only pleaſe, but improve us; and were written with a view of familiarizing to our minds thoſe ſublime objects, which will be the STUDY and DELIGHT of a glorious ETERNITY. How many have they tranſportingly entertained in their retirements and lonely walks, and how often elevated them to thoſe lofty heights, from whence they could look down on all things below (the delights of good mens friendſhip excepted) with an eaſy indifference! A ſtrain of the moſt ſerious piety and ardent devotion runs thro' them, and they tend to inculcate ſome of the moſt diſtinguiſhing doctrines of the goſpel, ſuch as the neceſſity of regeneration, the utter impotency of fallen man to help himſelf, the efficacy of the grace of God for that purpoſe, and the juſtification of a guilty ſinner through faith in the blood of Chriſt.

bridge, in 1752, when he entered at Clare-hall; and as he was of ſufficient ſtanding at Oxford, he ſtaid only the few days required by the ſtatutes to perform the univerſity-exerciſe.

It may be thought ſtrange, that he who had refuſed to hold his exhibition at Oxford, along with a curacy, ſhould, upon his father's death, accept of the two livings of Weſton-Favell and Collingtree, and hold them during his life. It was very far from being his choice, and it was what he had for a long time refuſed to do. He was determined againſt being a pluraliſt; and notwithſtanding his father kept him at Oxford, with a deſign, that he ſhould take his degree of Maſter of Arts, and conſtantly urged him to do it; yet he could not be perſuaded to yield to ſuch a requeſt, tho' he was of a ſufficient ſtanding to have taken the ſame, looking upon that ſtep as a qualification intended for his future holding both his father's livings. When his father died, he remained determined to have Weſton-Favell only; and this he frequently declared to his family and friends, and refuſed to accept of Collingtree, or to qualify himſelf for the ſame; inſomuch that it was in danger of lapſing to the Biſhop. But at length, thro' the earneſt and conſtant intreaties of his family, and of his friends, who, unknown to him, had ſent to, and procured from Oxford, the neceſſary certificates of his being a Bachelor of Arts, in order to his taking his Maſter's degree at Cambridge, he was, after much importunity, prevailed on to comply with their requeſts, hoping that he might be thereby enabled to do ſo much the more good. And when he waited upon Dr Thomas, the then Biſhop of Peterborough, for inſtitution to Collingtree, which was near ſix months after he had been inducted into Weſton, he ſaid to him, "I ſuppoſe your Lordſhip will be "ſurpriſed to ſee James Hervey come to deſire your Lord-"ſhip to permit him to be a pluraliſt; but I aſſure you, I do "it to ſatisfy the repeated ſolicitations of my mother and "my ſiſter, and not to pleaſe myſelf."

In November 1752, he publiſhed his *Remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's letters on the ſtudy and uſe of hiſtory, ſo far as they relate to the hiſtory of the Old Teſtament, and eſpecially*

cially to the case of Noah, denouncing a curse upon Canaan: In a letter to a lady of quality *.

The year following, having been called upon to preach, on the 10th of May, the sermon at the visitation of the Rev. Dr John Browne, Archdeacon of Northampton, at All-Saints church in that town; he permitted it, the same year, for the benefit of a poor diseased child, to be printed, under the title of *The cross of Christ the Christian's glory*. He had preached before this another sermon at the same church, which he had been solicited to print; but could not then be prevailed upon to do it: but since his death it has been published under the title of *The ministry of reconciliation*, &c. †

The same year he wrote a recommendatory preface to *Burnham's Pious Memorials; or, The power of religion on the mind in sickness, and at death; exemplified by the experience of many eminent persons at those important seasons.* His *Theron and Aspasio*, published in January 1755, in three volumes Octavo, met with the same approbation from the public as his *Meditations;* and the demand for this work likewise was very uncommon; it having passed through three editions in one year ‡. In

* The Rev. Mr Peter Whalley, Vicar of St Sepulchre's, in Northampton, has published, by way of supplement to this piece of Mr Hervey's, a vindication of the evidences and authenticity of the gospel from the objections of the late Lord Bolingbroke.

† A defence of this sermon from the groundless objections raised against it by some inconsiderate readers, will be found among Mr Hervey's tracts in this edition.

‡ This is the most valuable book, written in any language, on that grand and distinguishing doctrine of Christianity, the justification of a sinner before God by the righteousness of Christ imputed to him; which spreads itself through the whole system of divinity; and which Luther justly calls *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ*. In Mr Hervey's own words, "the beauty and "excellency of the *scriptures*,—the ruin and *depravity* of human "nature,—its happy *recovery*, founded on the atonement, and "effected by the Spirit of Christ,—are some of the chief points "vindicated, illustrated, and applied in this work.—But the "*grand* article, that which makes the principal figure, is the "IMPUTED RIGHTEOUSNESS of our divine Lord; from whence "arises our justification before God, and our title to every hea-

"venly

In 1756, Mr Hervey being informed of the design of reprinting *The gospel-mystery of sanctification*, by the Rev. Mr Walter Marshall, and of prefixing to it, by way of recommendation, what he had said in its favour in Theron and Aspasio, he wrote a letter, dated Nov. 5. 1756, to his bookseller, giving his consent, and enlarging on that recommendation. This he did the more readily, as Mr Marshall's book might (for so he has declared) be looked upon as no improper supplement to the dialogues and letters contained in Theron and Aspasio.

His Theron and Aspasio was attacked by several writers, particularly by Mr Robert Sandeman, a congregational preacher at Edinburgh, in a book, entitled, *Letters on Theron and Aspasio*; wherein the doctrine of the gospel, under the title of the popular doctrine, is most abominably misrepresented, and its tendency aspersed. The Arminians too objected to that work; and Mr John Wesley in particular wrote against it. Mr Cudworth wrote a defence of Theron and Aspasio; and Mr David Wilson, minister of the Scots congregation in Bow-lane, London, published a book, entitled, *Palæmon's creed reviewed*, &c. in which he vindicates Mr Hervey's doctrine, and exposes that of Mr Sandeman.

Mr Hervey's own defence of Theron and Aspasio against the objections of Mr John Wesley, was transcribed fair for the press from his short-hand copy, within a few pages; and would have been published in a volume of the same size with Theron and Aspasio, had he lived a few weeks longer. The manuscript was left in the possession of his brother Mr William Hervey, wine-merchant in Miles's-lane, London; who published it in 1766, for the reasons given by him in a preface prefixed to it *.

In

"venly blessing: An article, which, though eminent for its "importance, seems to be little understood, and less regarded; "if not much mistaken, and almost forgotten."

* This treatise contains the best, the most evangelical, and the most elaborate account of that righteousness, which is imputed

In Auguſt 1757, Mr Hervey obliged the public with three ſermons preached by him on the late public faſt-days. To which, in the third edition, in 1759, were added his viſitation-ſermon preached in 1753; his poſthumous ſermon on the miniſtry of reconciliation; and his conſiderations on the prevailing cuſtom of viſiting on Sundays. In a poſterior edition of theſe were given his Remarks on Lord Bolingbroke's letters, and a treatiſe on the religious education of daughters *.

In the ſame year likewiſe, he publiſhed a new edition of his favourite author, Mr Jenks's Meditations, in two volumes Octavo; to which he wrote a very ſtrong recommendatory preface, ſhewing the uſe of thoſe meditations, and the reaſon for ſuch republication †.

He intended to have wrote a treatiſe on goſpel-holineſs, as a ſupplement to Theron and Aſpaſio: and actually wrote a very excellent and judicious plan of it, which he communicated in letters to ſome of his correſpondents; but he did not live to finiſh it, to the very great loſs of the public.

His labours, both in his miniſterial office, and in his ſtudy, were purſued by him as long as poſſible, under the diſadvantage of a very weak conſtitution of body; which, together with the ſeverity of his laſt illneſs, he ſupported not only with incredible patience, but without a ſingle expreſſion of peeviſhneſs. That illneſs had long been coming on him; but greatly increaſed in the beginning of October 1758,

puted to a ſinner for his juſtification; and will be read with the higheſt delight, by every one that adores the Son of God as the *Lord our righteouſneſs*.

* Theſe ſermons and tracts are ſo valuable and excellent, that every one who reads them, will lament that he did not enrich the library of Chriſtianity with more of thoſe precious treaſures; which ſhew the accompliſhed gentleman, the learned ſcholar, the orthodox divine, the pious Chriſtian, the champion for the diſtinguiſhing doctrines of Chriſtianity, and the foe to ſelf-dependence, and every ſpecies of vice and infidelity.

† This preface, with that to Burnham's pious memorials, his letter to the publiſher of Marſhall on ſanctification, one to the publiſher of Mr Traill's works, &c. &c. are annexed to his tracts in this edition.

1758, and grew very formidable in the December following. For on Sabbath the 3d of that month, in the evening, after prayer in his family, he seemed to be arrested by the messenger of death; so that the united assistance of his sister and servant, with difficulty, enabled him to get up stairs into his room, from whence he never came down. His illness gaining ground every day, he soon became sensible that his end was approaching. He had frequent and violent returns of the cramp, which gave him most acute pain. He had likewise a hectic cough, which afflicted him so grievously in the night, that he could seldom lye in bed till four in the morning *; and was often obliged to rise at two, especially as opium (how much soever guarded by other medicines) would not agree with him. On the 15th of that month, he complained of a pain in his side; for which, at his own desire, he was blooded, tho' his physician Dr Stonhouse, in whom he placed the greatest confidence, had objected to it, apprehending him too weak to bear any evacuation of that kind.—When the surgeon came, he could scarcely perceive any pulsation, and therefore took away no more than four ounces of blood; intimating to his relations and friends, that the case was desperate, and that he had blooded him very unwillingly, and merely to satisfy Mr Hervey's desire, who had some hope that the pain might possibly be relieved by it. His curate, the Rev. Mr Abraham Maddock, being much with him in the afternoon of that day, Mr Hervey spoke to him in strong and pathetic terms of his assurance of faith, and of the great love of God in Christ. "O!" said he, "what has Christ, "how much has Christ done for me; and how little have I "done for so loving a Saviour! If I preached even once a-"week, it was at last a burden to me. I have not visited "the people of my parish, as I ought to have done; and thus "have preached, as it were, from house to house. I have "not taken every opportunity of speaking for Christ."

These expressions being accompanied with tears, which were

* When Mr Hervey was in tolerable health, he rarely lay in bed after six, even in the winter; and rose still earlier in the summer.

were too visible not to be observed; and left his tears should be misinterpreted, as they had been conversing about his expected end, and of his assurance of happiness, he proceeded thus: "Do not think, that I am afraid to die. I "assure you I am not. I know what my Saviour hath done "for me, and I want to be gone. But I wonder and la- "ment to think of the love of Christ in doing so much for "me; and how little I have done for him." And in another conversation, discoursing likewise of his approaching dissolution, which he did with the utmost calmness and serenity; and of the little which we know of God's word; he said, "How many precious texts are there, big with the "most rich truths of Christ, which we cannot comprehend, "which we know nothing of; and of those we do know, "how few do we remember? *Bonus textuarius est bonus "theologus.* "A good textuary is a good divine;" and "that is the armour; the word of God is the sword. Those "texts are the weapons, which I must use, when that sub- "tile spirit, that arch-adversary of mankind, comes to "tempt and sift me in my last conflict. Surely I had need "be well provided with these weapons; I had need have "my quiver full of them, to answer Satan with texts out "of the word of God, when he assaults me. Thus did "Christ when he was tempted in the wilderness."

On the 19th the pains of his body abated, and he grew drowsy and lethargic; but in the night following his immediate death was apprehended.

The next day, the 20th, he was visited by Dr Stonhouse, who declared, that, in his opinion, Mr Hervey could not live above three or four days; and happening to speak of the many consolations through Christ, which a good man enjoys in the prospect of death, and discoursing on the emptiness of worldly honour to an immortal, and on the unprofitableness of riches to the irreligious; Mr Hervey replied, "True, Doctor, true; the only valuable treasures "are in heaven. What would it avail me now to be Arch- "bishop of Canterbury? Disease would shew no respect to

"my mitre. That prelate * is not only very great, but, "I am told, he has religion really at heart. Yet it is god- "lineſs, and not grandeur, that will avail him hereafter. "The goſpel is offered to me a poor country parſon, the "ſame as to his Grace. Chriſt makes no difference between "us. Oh! why then do miniſters thus neglect the charge "of ſo kind a Saviour; fawn upon the great, and hunt "after worldly preferments with ſo much eagerneſs, to "the diſgrace of our order? Theſe, theſe are the things, "Doctor, and not our poverty, or obſcurity, which ren- "der the clergy ſo juſtly contemptible to the worldlings. "No wonder the ſervice of our church, grieved I am to "ſay it, is become ſuch a formal lifeleſs thing, ſince it is, "alas! too generally executed by perſons dead to godli- "neſs in all their converſation; whoſe indifference to reli- "gion, and worldly-minded behaviour, proclaim the little "regard they pay to the doctrines of the Lord, who bought "them."

When the Doctor was going away, Mr Hervey, with great tenderneſs, obſerved to him, that as not long ago he had a dangerous fall from his horſe, by which he was much bruiſed; and as he had been lately ill, and then looked very pale, he hoped he would think on theſe narrow eſcapes, ſo often fatal to others, as a kind of warning from God to him, and remember them as ſuch; adding, "How careful "ought we to be to improve thoſe years which remain, at "a time of life, when but few can remain for us †?"

The day before his death, Mr Hervey went a few ſteps acroſs his room; but immediately finding his ſtrength failing him, he ſunk rather than fell down; his fall being broken by his ſiſter, who, obſerving his weakneſs, ran and caught him; but he fainted away, and was in all appearance dead, it being a conſiderable time before any pulſe could be perceived. When he came to himſelf, his brother Mr

* The late Dr Thomas Secker, who died Aug. 3. 1768.

† Dr Stonhouſe and Mr Hervey being then between forty and fifty years old. The Doctor lately entered into holy orders in the church of England, and has got a good living in the country.

Mr William Hervey, who was come from London to visit him, said, "We were afraid you was gone." He answered, "I wish I had." And well he might wish so, for his strength was quite exhausted, his body extremely emaciated, and his bones so sore, that he could not bear any one to touch him, when it was necessary to move him about. Yet, under all this calamity, he was ever praising God for his mercies †, and for enduing him with patience ‡.

On the 25th (Christmas-day,) on which he died, Mr Maddock paying him his morning-visit, Mr Hervey lifted up his head, and opened his eyes, as he sat in his easy chair, (for he could not lye in bed,) to see who it was, and said, "Sir, I cannot talk with you." He complained much all this day of a great inward conflict which he had, laying his hand upon his breast, and saying, "O! you know not how great "a conflict I have." During this time, he almost constantly lifted up his eyes towards heaven, with his hands clasped together in a praying form, and said, two or three times, "When this great conflict is over, then—" but said no more; though it was understood he meant that then he should go to rest."

Dr Stonhouse came to him about three hours before he expired. Mr Hervey urged strongly and affectionately to the Doctor the importance and care of his everlasting concerns, as here is no abiding place; and intreated him not to be overcharged with the cares of this life *, but to attend, amidst the multiplicity of his business, to the "one "thing needful ‖:" *Which*

† He never received a bit of lemon to moisten his mouth, without thanking God for his bounty and goodness, in creating so many helps and refreshments to a sick and decaying body

‡ A few years ago Mr Hervey had a terrible fever at his brother William's house, in which he had several blisters. On this occasion Mr William Hervey wrote as follows to one of his intimate friends: "My brother is indeed an example of patience. "—He has not spoke (during the whole of his severe illness) "one single word of peevishness.—I am persuaded he prays for "you, and remembers you now he lyes sick upon his bed. I "hope this will find you and yours well, walking in the fear "of the Lord, and the comforts of his Holy Spirit."

* See Luke xxi. 34. ‖ Luke x. 42.

Which done, the pooreſt can no wants endure,
And which not done, the richeſt muſt be poor ‡. POPE.

The Doctor ſeeing the great difficulty and pain with which he ſpoke, (for he was almoſt ſuffocated with phlegm and frequent vomitings,) and finding, by his pulſe, that the pangs of death were then coming on, deſired that he would ſpare himſelf. "No," ſaid he, "Doctor, no; you tell "me I have but a few moments to live. O! let me ſpend "them in adoring our great Redeemer." He then repeated the 26th verſe of Pſal. lxxiii. *Tho' my fleſh and my heart fail me, yet God is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever;* and he expatiated in a moſt ſtriking manner on theſe words of Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 22. 23. *All things are yours; life and death; for ye are Chriſt's* §. "Here," ſays he, "is the treaſure of a Chriſtian. Death is reckoned "among this inventory; and a noble treaſure it is. How "unthankful am I for death, as it is the paſſage through "which I paſs to the Lord and Giver of eternal life; and "as it frees me from all this miſery you now ſee me en-"dure, and which I am willing to endure, as long as God "thinks fit; for I know, he will by and by, in his own "good time, diſmiſs me from the body. Theſe light afflic-"tions are but for a moment, and then comes an eternal "weight of glory. O! welcome, welcome death!—— "Thou may'ſt well be reckoned among the treaſures of the "Chriſtian. To live is Chriſt, but to die is gain." After which, as the Doctor was taking his final leave of him, Mr Hervey expreſſed great gratitude for his viſits, tho' it had been long out of the power of medicines to cure him. He then paused a little, and with great ſerenity and ſweetneſs in his countenance, though the pangs of death were upon him, being raiſed a little in his chair, repeated thoſe words, *Lord,*

‡ Mr Hervey uſed frequently to repeat theſe lines with ſuch an emphaſis, and ſignificant look, as conveyed their important meaning in a manner not eaſily to be forgot.

§ This paſſage is illuſtrated in a very inſtructive manner by Dr Doddridge, in his *Family-expoſitor*, and contains the ſubſtance of what Mr Hervey ſaid, and to which he referred.

Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, according to thy moſt holy and comfortable *word, for mine eyes have ſeen thy* precious *ſalvation.* " Here, Doctor is my " cordial! What are all the cordials given to ſupport the " dying, in compariſon of that which ariſes from the pro- " miſes of ſalvation by Chriſt? This, this ſupports me." About three o'clock he ſaid, " The great conflict is over.— " Now all is done." After which he ſcarce ſpoke any other words intelligibly, except now and then *precious ſalvation.*

During the laſt hour he ſaid nothing, but leaned his head againſt the ſide of an eaſy chair, and without a ſigh, groan, ſtruggle, or the leaſt emotion in the world, he ſhut his eyes, and died, between four and five in the afternoon, on Chriſtmas-day 1758, in the forty-fifth year of his age. ——God grant, that we may all live the life and die the death of the righteous;—and that our laſt end may be like his.

When his body was conveyed to church, it was covered, by his expreſs deſire, with the poor's pall, and he was buried under the middle of the communion-table in the chancel of Weſton-Favell church, on Friday Dec. 28. in the preſence of a numerous congregation, full of regret for the loſs of ſo excellent a paſtor. His funeral was indeed a moſt awful and very affecting ſight.—Mr Maddock his curate, who buried him, was himſelf in tears.—Some were wringing their hands, others ſobbing, many were ſilently weeping, but all were inwardly and ſincerely grieved, as their looks ſufficiently teſtified;—and his attendants then bore a viſible witneſs, that he had not been altogether unſerviceable in his generation.—The poor thankfully acknowledged it; and, as they looked into his grave, ſeemed to ſay within themſelves, " There lyes the man whoſe unwearied " kindneſs was the conſtant relief of my various diſtreſſes; " who tenderly viſited my languiſhing bed, and readily ſup- " plied my indigent circumſtances."——Others, once ignorant and ungodly, looked at his grave, and ſeemed by their expreſſive ſighs to ſay, " Here are the laſt remains of that " ſincere friend *who watched for my ſoul.*——I tremble to " think into what irretrieveable ruin I might quickly have " been

"been plunged, had not his faithful admonitions and re-
"peated exhortations arrested me in the wild career. I was
"then unacquainted with the gospel of peace; but now en-
"lightened by his instructions, I see the all-sufficiency of
"my Saviour. His discourses are still warm on my heart,
"and I trust will be more and more operative on my life *."

It may truly be said of Mr Hervey, that few lives have ever been more heavenly, and few deaths more triumphant. ——He died in the Lord, and is now at rest; where even the wicked cease from troubling. His name is recorded in the annals of eternity; and the honours conferred on him by Christ, will for ever continue blooming and incorruptible in the world of glory.

His character, both in his public and private capacity, was of the most exemplary kind.

As a minister, he performed all the duties of that office with the greatest strictness. In the pulpit he was earnest and fervent, and shewed that he felt the efficacy of what he preached. Nor did he think it sufficient to preach on the Lord's day only, but set up a weekly lecture every Wednesday evening †, at Weston-Favell church, which was very well attended. His zeal for the performance of his duty, was however, for some time before he died, much interrupted by the ill state of his health, which would not permit him personally to take due care even of the parish of Weston, where he resided.—A circumstance that gave him inexpressible concern.—The last two or three years of his life he could scarce do any thing more than preach once on the Lord's day, when people from many miles around flocked to hear him. His Wednesday evening lecture at seven he discontinued for the last year. He had not been able for some time to preach at Collingtree ‡, or to visit his

* See Meditations among the tombs.

† This lecture was held during the winter half-year at seven, as it did not then interfere with the work of the labouring people; and he illuminated the church out of his own pocket, not chusing to put the parish to any additional expence.

‡ Weston-Favell, and Collingtree, the two family-livings, are within five measured miles of each other; which Mr Hervey and his curate used to attend alternately, till his ill health confined him entirely to Weston-Favell.

his parishioners at their own houses, as his custom had been: but he encouraged them to come to him, and to converse freely on the subjects relating to their eternal interests; and on such occasions he would speak with a force and propriety peculiar to himself. He would frequently lament his inability to serve his people, comparing himself to a bleeding disabled soldier, and *only not slain.*

He always preached without notes, except on some very particular occasions; but his method was judicious, clear, and not encumbered with too many subdivisions. His weakness rendering him for several months before his death incapable of speaking to his congregation as usual, he shortened his discourses, and took a most useful method of inculcating his instructions; for after he had expounded his text, and divided his sermon into two heads,) rarely into more, and never exceeding three,) he would speak briefly, and at the conclusion of each head enforce what he had said, by a pertinent text of scripture, desiring his congregation (which (was generally very numerous) to turn to their Bibles, and double down that text. "Now," added he, "my dear "brethren, if you forget my sermon, you cannot forget "God's word in this text, unless you wilfully throw your "Bibles aside. Shew these to your children, or the absent "part of your family, when you return home." Then he gave a striking exhortation, and at the end of it another text for them to double down; so that they had always three texts; in order to their finding of which, he paused in the pulpit two or three minutes. This method was attended with another good effect: it obliged the generality of his hearers to bring their Bibles along with them; for those who were without a Bible lost the benefit of the texts, and were unemployed, while the majority who had one were busy in looking for the passages referred to in his sermon.

He endeavoured as much as possible to divest himself in his public discourses of his usual elegancy of style, and to adapt his language to the lowest capacity. In this he followed the example of Luther, who in his *Table-talk* says, "If "in

"in my preaching I were to pay a regard to Philip Me-"lanchthon and other learned divines, then I ſhould do "little good. I preach in the plaineſt manner to the illite-"rate, and that gives content to all. Hebrew, Greek, and "Latin, I ſpare till we learned ones come together." Mr Hervey thought perſpicuous language and evangelical doctrine of much more importance to his pariſhioners, than elaborate or ornamented diſcourſes; though few men living, perhaps, were more capable of ſatisfying a polite or learned audience.

His method of catechiſing children in church, and of ſpeaking to them in private, was very engaging and uſeful. He would put little queſtions to them, after they had repeated the words of the catechiſm; as for inſtance, "Well, my "little maid, let me hear if you underſtand what you ſaid. "If you do underſtand the meaning of theſe words, you "will then be able to anſwer the queſtions I ſhall put to you *. He would at theſe times aſk not only ſuch queſtions as were ſuitable to the words of the catechiſm, but alſo ſuch as would ſtrike at the capital vices of his pariſhioners, yet without giving perſonal offence †.

He

* See ſome farther account of his manner of catechiſing, in one of his letters.

† Some of his pariſhioners having lain in bed on a Sunday morning longer than he approved,—and others having been buſy in fodderíng their cattle when he was coming to church, and ſeveral having frequented the alehouſe, he thus catechiſed one of the children before the congregation:

Repeat me the fourth commandment—Now, little man, do you underſtand the meaning of this commandment?—Yes, Sir.—Then, if you do, you will be able to anſwer me theſe queſtions.—Do thoſe keep holy the Sabbath-day, who lye in bed till eight or nine o'clock in the morning, inſtead of riſing to ſay their prayers and read the Bible? No, Sir.—Do thoſe keep the Sabbath who fodder their cattle, when other people are going to church? No, Sir.—Does God Almighty bleſs ſuch people as go to alehouſes, and don't mind the inſtructions of their miniſter? No, Sir.—Don't thoſe who love God read their Bible to their families, particularly on Sunday evenings, and have prayers every morning and night in their houſes? Yes, Sir.—A great variety of ſuch pertinent and familiar queſtions he would fre-

He did not forget that he was a minister in his house; for he worshipped God with his family twice a-day. He supped at eight every night, and at nine he expounded a text of scripture for about a quarter of an hour, and seldom longer, except when some friend was present, to whom he thought his discourse might be useful, or when particularly requested to enlarge. After this he concluded with prayer.

He breakfasted at nine, and about eight he called his family together, and required each of his servants to repeat by heart the text which he had explained the preceding evening, and then he would recapitulate his exposition; by which method, both his text and commentary were imprinted on their memories. After this he had prayers.

In the afternoon, when he was called down to tea, he used to bring his Hebrew Bible or Greek Testament with him, and would speak (as he was ever studious how he might promote the glory of God, and improve time) either upon one or more verses, as occasion offered, in the most instructive and entertaining manner imaginable. And in the summer-season he would now and then drink tea, when his health would permit him, with some of his most serious parishioners; and then five or six of the neighbours were invited, and Mr Hervey's conversation was remarkably affecting, as he had a happy talent at spiritualizing almost every incident, and was naturally of a most obliging and chearful disposition.

He was a member of an assembly formed for Christian improvement, which was established in his neighbourhood on the 7th of July 1747, and constantly attended it so long as he was able to ride to the place of meeting. A short account of the rules of this assembly is given at the end of his tracts, together with two prayers composed by him for the use of the members thereof.

In the exercise of his charity, Mr Hervey chose to clothe the poor rather than to give them money; and he would get

frequently ask in the most engaging manner, on every part of the catechism, as he thought most conducive to the improvement and reformation of his parish.

get some judicious person to buy linen, coarse cloth, stockings, shoes, &c. for them at the best hand; alledging that the poor could not purchase on such good terms what they wanted at the little shops, and with small sums of money. "I am" said he, "God's steward for the poor, and I must "husband the little pittance I have to bestow upon them, "and make it go as far as possible." But when money would be really serviceable to a family, as to a prudent housekeeper, distressed by sickness or misfortunes, he would give five or more guineas at a time; taking care that it should not be known whence the money came. Pope's compliment to Mr Allen of Bath, might be justly applied to him, who would

Do good by stealth, and blush to find it fame.

He was particularly desirous of getting the advice of a physician (or at least of some judicious apothecary) for the sick poor; and was ever ready to procure them the very best medicines.—A most beneficial sort of charity to mankind; and in which it were to be wished he had many imitators.——He would frequently petition such physicians of his acquaintance in different parts of the kingdom, as he apprehended thus charitably disposed, to give their advice occasionally, when they rode thro' a town, to such poor creatures as the clergyman of the place, or some substantial inhabitant, should recommend as real objects of compassion. ——Mr Hervey would then with great pleasure, and with as much gratitude to the physician, as if done to himself, defray the expence of what medicines were wanted. He greatly disapproved of the clergy's attempting to give medicines to their parishioners; as he judiciously inferred, that it was impossible for them to do it with the requisite judgment. "Let my brethren," he would say, "give them "wine, bread, or beer, and get good spoon-meats made for "them; but medicines are of too important a nature to be "given indiscriminately." He observed, that by his own method the sick poor had the very best medicines, as the physician saw them himself, and bought them very cheap, because

becauſe the apothecary, knowing they were for charitable uſes, charged the phyſician no more for them than prime coſt *, with ſome little allowance merely for his trouble in compounding them; and as the phyſician knew what diſeaſes were curable, there was no waſte of medicines in fruitleſs attempts to cure caſes, which, tho' actually incurable, perſons of leſs judgment could not pronounce to be ſo.

He gave away a great number of good books, with ſuitable inſtructions for their uſe; and eſpecially Bibles. In the blank leaf he frequently wrote ſomething capable of making an impreſſion, or elſe ſtuck in a printed paper relating to the promiſes of God, in and thro' Jeſus Chriſt, or to creation, preſervation, and redemption †.

All the future profits of his works he has left to ſome of the charitable uſes above-ſpecified, except his Meditations; the copy of which he had ſold, after it had paſſed through ſeveral editions; which ſale of the copy, and the profits of the former impreſſions, amounted to about 700 l. all of which he gave away in charity. He ſaid, that it was devoted to God, and that he would on no account apply it to worldly uſes; that he wrote not for profit or fame, but to ſerve the cauſe of God; and as Providence had bleſſed his attempt, he thought himſelf bound to relieve the diſtreſſes of his fellow-creatures with it.

In any expences relating to himſelf, he was extremely frugal, that he might be liberal to others; and it was always his deſire to die juſt even with the world. "I will be my own executor," ſaid he. And as he died on Chriſtmas-day, his fund expired almoſt with his life. What little remained, he deſired might be given in warm cloathing to the poor in that ſevere ſeaſon.

To theſe inſtances of his charity, we may properly add an incident, which, how trifling ſoever in itſelf, yet affords a very ſtrong proof, not only of the benevolence of his heart,

* Whenever he ſolicited the aſſiſtance of apothecaries on theſe charitable occaſions, he deſired the favour of them to relinquiſh their uſual profits; promiſing, on that condition, to repay what they might be out of pocket.

† See a copy of this printed paper among his tracts.

but of his regard to practical religion, and to the doing of every good work within his power.

A day or two before his death, when he was reduced to such extreme weakness as to be unable to read, and could with difficulty speak, a little account being settled with him by a friend, on the balance of which he received 18s. looking on the money with great indifference, he expressed himself to this effect: "I would gladly dispose of this small "sum, in such manner as may do the most good. It is the "only act which I now am, and probably the last that I shall "be, able to perform. Give yourself the trouble of look-"ing amongst these books, and you will find Mr Richards's "pamphlet*: at the latter end of which are, I remember, "some hints concerning the means of promoting religion "in ourselves or others, which (even with some additions "and improvements, which you might easily make) will "not fill more than a sheet of paper†, and, if stuck up or "framed, might be particularly useful in that form.—— "Let then such a number of them be printed and given a-"way, as this money will admit of."—His orders were properly executed; and the evidences of such an angelic temper were equally matter of edification and comfort to his friend, as this charitable legacy, if we may so call it, will be to all who receive and rightly use it.

This incident affords a striking evidence of the happy fruits and effects of his favourite doctrine and strong expressions of the all-sufficient righteousness of Christ as the sole requisite to justification before God, and acceptance with him, and shews that indeed his faith wrought by love. No man had ever a greater disregard for money; which he esteemed unworthy of his notice on any other account, than as it furnished him with the means of doing good.

Surely

* This pamphlet (wrote by the Rev. Mr Richards of Northampton, and formerly of Trinity College, Oxford) is entitled, *Hints for religious conversation, with the afflicted in mind, body, and estate, and with such others as stand in need of spiritual assistance, especially at the times when they are confined by sickness.*

† The *Hints*, &c. which were printed in the single sheet of paper, are subjoined to Mr Hervey's tracts in this edition.

Surely we may here borrow the ſentiment and expreſſion of the celebrated Mr Pope, and juſtly conclude, that

He felt his ruling paſſion ſtrong in death.

Mr Hervey was indeed too negligent of his dreſs, which, tho' it could not in the leaſt leſſen the reſpect paid to him in his own pariſh, and neighbourhood, where he was ſo well known, yet he would unqueſtionably have avoided it, if he had lived in a more public ſcene, where the decency and propriety of appearance are of much greater importance.

In learning he was inferior to few. Greek was almoſt as familiar to him as his native language. He was a great maſter of the claſſics; and in the younger part of his life had written ſome copies of verſes, which ſhewed no contemptible genius for poetry. He had a critical knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and delighted in it.

With reſpect to his private capacity, he was never known to be in a paſſion. He lived as in heaven. No worldly concerns (though he ſometimes met with very trying ones) ever affected him. His humility rendered him invulnerable. ——When he was miſrepreſented and calumniated, he would ſay, "Our enemies are ſometimes our beſt friends, and "tell us truths; and then we ſhould amend our faults, "and be thankful for ſuch information: and if what "they ſay be not true, and only ſpoke thro' malice, then "ſuch perſons are to be conſidered as diſeaſed in their minds, "and that he would pray for them. They are to be piti-"ed," ſays he," and I might be as juſtly angry with a man, "who is diſeaſed in his body."

All this he ſpoke with humility, ſeriouſneſs, and ſweetneſs; for it was the language of his heart, and not of affectation. In his ordinary tranſactions with others, he was ever cheerful, punctual, juſt, and candid to perſons of every denomination.

He frequently wrote religious letters to his acquaintance according to their different circumſtances, in the moſt amiable and convincing manner; and he ſeemed to make it almoſt

moſt an invariable rule, not to write a letter on any occaſion, without at leaſt one pious ſentence in it *; and that not introduced in a forced and aukward manner, but interwoven ſo as to appear naturally to ariſe from the ſubject. Of this kind ſome ſpecimens may be ſeen in the note at the bottom of the page †.

Notwithſtanding Mr Hervey lived a very holy and exemplary life, preaching Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified, and inculcating the practice of real religion and holineſs in heart and life, yet his enemies (for, ſtrange as it is, even Mr Hervey himſelf, the moſt inoffenſive of men, had enemies) have not ſcrupled to aſſert, that "his tenets were diſhonourable to God, ſubverſive of all goſpel-holineſs, deſtructive even of common morality, and very injurious "to ſociety itſelf, by making men melancholy, and regard-

"leſs

* *Nulla dies ſine linea, Nulla epiſtola ſine Chriſto*, were Mr Hervey's maxims.

† Theſe ſpecimens are taken from haſty meſſage-cards, or billets, to ſome of his intimate friends.

"When I ſee my dear friend, we will talk about the contents "of his laſt. My money is Chriſt's, and I only deſire that he "will give me benevolence to diſpoſe of it willingly; diſcre-"tion to beſtow it prudently. I hope you have quite recover-"ed, and adapted the Pſalmiſt's reſolution, *Pſal.* cxvi. 8, 9. "What do you think is the meaning of that remarkable expreſ-"ſion, *I will walk before the Lord?*

In another billet to a perſon about retiring from buſineſs he writes,

"Thanks for your *Witſius de œconomia fœderum*. The time, "I hope, is coming, when you will have leiſure to read, a "heart to reliſh, and a tongue to diſplay ſuch precious doctrines."

In another he writes,

"Let us all remember, my dear friend, that time is upon "the wing;—eternity is at our door; therefore what we do "for our bleſſed Maſter, we muſt do quickly."

Mr Hervey's letters were collected, and publiſhed, in two volumes octavo, in 1760. A full and particular account of them is given in the preface prefixed to them in this edition. They exhibit, in their purport, compoſition, and tendency, a ſtriking and amiable picture of the ingenuity, learning, candour, and piety of the excellent author.

"leſs of buſineſs." Theſe were the very words of an abuſive and anoymous letter ſent to him by the poſt; on which, that meek and moſt excellent man obſerved to an intimate friend, with all his uſual mildneſs, "Indeed this gentleman "may be ſaid, I think, to write at random. Surely he has "never read my works. If I knew where to direct to him, "I ſhould deſire him to turn to what I have advanced "in the ninth paragraph of my *Contemplations on the ſtarry* "*heavens* *, and ſuch a reply, I would hope, might convince "him of his miſtake."

Some of Mr Hervey's friends thought he carried the Calviniſtical tenets ſo far, that conſequences diſadvantageous to religion might be deduced from them, and which he himſelf,

* Some, I believe, are apt to imagine, that they muſt renounce ſociety, if they devote themſelves to Chriſt; and abandon all the ſatisfaction of this world, if they once become zealous candidates for the felicity of another.—But this is a very miſtaken notion, or elſe a very injurious repreſentation of the doctrine, which is according to godlineſs. It was never intended to drive men into deſarts, but to lead them through the peaceful and pleaſant paths of wiſdom, into the bleſsful regions of life eternal. It was never intended to ſtrike off the wheels of *buſineſs*, or cut in ſunder the ſinews of *induſtry*; but rather to make men induſtrious from a principle of *conſcience*, not from the inſtigations of *avarice*; that they may promote their immortal happineſs, even while they provide for their temporal maintenance.—It has no deſign to extirpate our paſſions, but only to reſtrain their irregularities; neither would it damp the delights of ſenſe, but prevent them from evaporating into vanity, and ſubſiding into gall. A perſon may be chearful amongſt his friends, yet joyful in God.—He may taſte the ſweets of his earthly eſtate, and at the ſame time cheriſh his hopes of a nobler inheritance in heaven.

The *trader* may proſecute the demands of commerce, without neglecting to negociate the affairs of his ſalvation:—The *warrior* may wear his ſword; may draw, in a juſt cauſe, that murderous weapon; and yet be a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt, and obtain the crown that fadeth not away.—The parent may lay up a competent portion for his children, and not forfeit his title to the treaſures either of grace or glory. So far is Chriſtianity from obſtructing any valuable intereſts, or with-holding any real pleaſure, that it evidently advances the one, and improves the other.

ſelf, inſtead of aſſenting to them, would have ſtartled at and rejected with abhorrence. The fact is, the doctrine he delivered in his writings, is purely ſcriptural, and agreeable to that contained in all the confeſſions of the reformed churches; and is ſo far from having a tendency to weaken the obligations to purity and holineſs of life, that it promotes them in the moſt effectual manner, and has the moſt happy influence on morality. When perſons of judgment have pointed out to him ſome expreſſions that were liable to be miſunderſtood in that reſpect, he always diſavowed any ſuch meaning; and affirmed, that the fault was not in the evangelical doctrines ſo much inſiſted on by him, but in the miſapprehenſion, ignorance, or inattention of thoſe who abuſed them to licentiouſneſs. He would then add, he was ready to alter or retract any ſentiment or expreſſion which he apprehended to be truly objectionable; but that to make things equally clear to every one's apprehenſion, or to have the ſame effect upon every one's mind, was an impracticable attempt; that he profeſſed himſelf a Calviniſt, and that conſequently the Arminians would not reliſh ſome things he advanced, tho' what he wrote was exactly conformable to the church-articles, which are Calviniſtical; yet he hoped they would not reject the whole, becauſe they could not in every point concur with him; and that his writings in general might be uſeful, how much ſoever ſome of his particular (tho' truly ſcriptural) opinions might be doubted or cenſured. And on this head let us hear Mr Hervey himſelf. He, in a letter written by him a very little before his happy death, thus expreſſes himſelf: "Do "they who deny faith, and extol their good works, diſtin-"guiſh themſelves by the practice of them?—I will be bold "to ſay, that, on an impartial examination, the majority "will be found on the ſide of thoſe who embrace the doc-"trine of the imputation of Chriſt's righteouſneſs, and "who expect ſalvation by him alone."

Of the compliments publicly paid to his piety and genius, it will be ſufficient to inſert a paragraph from the Northampton Mercury, which may be ſeen at the bottom of next page,

page *; and the following eulogium extracted from the Rev. Mr Dodd's poem on the Epiphany:

——————————*Thou* HERVEY, *too*,
Whose page and soul alike breathe humblest love
To thy ador'd Redeemer; thou hast shewn
That piety and polish'd elegance
May well together suit: and while remains
Or piety, or elegance, thy works,
Like genuine gold, the touchstone *will abide,*
And grateful to thy countrymen remain!
Oh! may I to my lowly strains derive
Some merit from the friendship of thy name;
Strains, whose exalted subject fills my heart
So constant with delight; and from thy tongue
IN CONVERSE *pours such streams of eloquence,*
That the wrapt hearer wonders at his fears
Of death ere while, and glowing with the love
Of JESU, *caught from thee, longs to behold*
His Saviour in the clouds: for who can stand
Amidst the sweetness of Arabian *groves,*
And not hear thence some fragrance?—Valu'd friend,
Proceed: and (thy too feeble strength renew'd)
May

* On Christmas day, in the afternoon, died, in the 45th year of his age, the Rev. Mr James Hervey, Rector of Weston-Favell, near Northampton, and the author of the *Meditations on the tombs, flower-garden,* &c.—He was one of the most eminent instances of the power of Christianity upon the human mind.—In his ministerial province he was pious, fervent, and indefatigable.—In his ordinary connections with the community, he was ever chearful, conscientiously punctual in all his dealings, and amiably candid to persons of every denomination.—To his charities he set no bounds, scarcely leaving himself the mere requisites of his station.—Under the severest trials of infirmity for several years, he displayed the highest example of fortitude, serenity, patience, and an entire resignation to the divine will.—His writings most abundantly evidence his learning and ingenuity.—But, reader, it is not the acquisitions of his understanding, but the improvements of his heart, and his confidence in the great Redeemer, which will now avail this most excellent man.

May to hoar age thy journey be prolong'd,
And strew'd each step with blessings to mankind!

We shall close this account of Mr Hervey's life, with the following elegy on him *:

URANIA *speak! in pensive numbers tell*
How ZION *trembled when great* HERVEY *fell!*
When fail'd his strength, and when his pulse beat low,
Tell how she mourn'd to see th' impending blow!
O thou, to whom all sacred themes belong,
Pour forth the sweetly-melancholy song!
" *Alas! grim death hath shot the fatal dart,*
" *Which long seem'd pointed at his languid heart,*
" *Th' insatiate tyrant, crown'd with sun'ral gloom,*
" *In triumph drags him to the hollow tomb;*
" *Who now so well can paint the blooming flow'r,*
" *Or preach from* Sepulchres *at midnight hour?*
" *Who now so well the starry heavens scan,*
" *And read the lectures Nature meant for man?*
" *No more his voice a careless world can move,*
" *Or tell the wonders of redeeming love;*
" *No more shall thousands round his pulpit throng,*
" *To hear the heavenly precepts of his tongue:*
" *For lo! above this gross impurer air,*
" *Releas'd from ev'ry pain, and every care,*
" *He soars aloft (angelic hosts his guide)*
" *On wings new plum'd, which ne'er before he try'd.*
" *With*

* The reader may be assured, that these verses were wrote by a very serious and well-disposed young man, apprentice to a Jersey comber, in the town of Northampton, in a low station of life, and of no liberal education; whose mind, by Mr James Hervey's preaching and writings, had been very early impressed with the sacred ardor of piety and poetry. The original copy is now in the hands of the Rev. Mr Richard Onely, of Clipston, A. M. master of the free school there, to whom it was lately transmitted by a friend of the lad's, for his inspection and correction: the alterations he has made are not many; and, upon the whole, it may be considered as a kind of Christian *apotheosis*; or, at least, a neat elegiac garland, not altogether unworthy of being hung over that great and good man's tomb.

" *With rapid ſpeed his golden pinions riſe*
" *Thro' ſtarry plains, and ſkim th' empyrean ſkies.*
" *And now where ſparkling portals wide diſplay*
" *The bliſsful regions of eternal day;*
" *His Lord receives him 'midſt celeſtial choirs,*
" *Who crown his head, and ſtrike their golden lyres:*
" *Thro' heav'n's glad courts the greeting anthems roll,*
" *And joys new blooming feaſt his raviſh'd ſoul;*
" *Joys which to tell all eloquence is faint,*
" *And which the loftieſt muſe can never paint.*"

VERSES to Mr HERVEY,

ON HIS

MEDITATIONS.

IN theſe lov'd ſcenes, what rapt'rous graces ſhine,
Live in each leaf, and breathe in every line!
What ſacred beauties beam throughout the whole,
To charm the ſenſe, and ſteal upon the ſoul!
In claſſic elegance, and thoughts—his own,
We ſee our faults, as in a mirror, ſhown:
Each truth in glaring characters expreſt,
All own the twin-reſemblance in their breaſt:
His eaſy periods, and perſuaſive page,
At once amend, and entertain the age:
Nature's wide fields all open to his view,
He charms the mind with ſomething ever new:
On fancy's pinions, his advent'rous ſoul
Wantons unbounded, and pervades the whole;
From death's dark caverns in the earth below,
To ſpheres, where planets roll, or comets glow.

Hence may propitious melancholy flow,
And safety find me in the vaults of wo.
While ev'ry virtue forms thy mental feast,
I glow with fair sincerity at least:
I feel *(thy face unknown)* thy heart refin'd,
And taste, with bliss, the beauties of thy mind;
Collecting clearly, through thy sacred plan,
What reverence of GOD! what love to man!
—O! when at last our deathless forms shall rise,
And flow'rs and stars desist to moralize;
Shall then my soul, by thine inform'd, survey,
And bear the splendors of essential day?
But while my thoughts indulge the glorious scope,
(My utmost worth beneath my humblest hope,)
Conscience, or some exhorting angel, cries,
"No lazy wishes reach above the skies.
"Would you indeed the perfect scenes survey,
"And share the triumphs of unbounded day;
"His love-diffusive life with ardor live;
"And die like this divine contemplative."

London, July 9. 1748.

By a PHYSICIAN.

TO form the taste, and raise the nobler part,
To mend the morals, and to warm the heart;
To trace the genial source, we nature call,
And prove the GOD of nature friend of all;
HERVEY for *this* his mental landscape drew,
And sketch'd the whole creation out to view.
Th' enamell'd bloom, and variegated flow'r,
Whose crimson changes with the changing hour;
The humble shrub, whose fragrance scents the morn,
With buds disclosing to the early dawn;
The oaks that grace *Britannia*'s mountains side,
And spicy *Lebanon*'s superior pride; *

All

* The cedar.

All loudly Sov'REIGN EXCELLENCE proclaim,
And animated worlds confeſs the ſame.
The azure fields that form th' extended ſky,
The planetary globes that roll on high,
And ſolar orbs, of proudeſt blaze, combine,
To act ſubſervient to the great deſign.
Men, angels, ſeraphs, join the gen'ral voice:
And in the Lord of nature ALL rejoice.
HIS, the grey *Winter*'s venerable guiſe,
Its ſhrouded glories, and inſtructive ſkies ‡;
HIS, the ſnow's plumes, that brood the ſick'ning blade;
HIS, the bright pendant, that impearls the glade;
The waving foreſt, or the whiſp'ring brake,
The ſurging billow, or the ſleeping lake.
The SAME, who pours the beauties of the ſpring,
Or mounts the whirlwind's deſolating wing.
The SAME, who ſmiles in nature's peaceful form,
Frowns in the tempeſt, and directs the ſtorm.
'Tis thine, bright teacher, to improve the age;
'Tis thine, whoſe life's a comment on thy page,
Thy happy page; whoſe periods ſweetly flow,
Whoſe figures charm us, and whoſe colours glow;
Where *artleſs* piety pervades the whole,
Refines the genius, and exalts the ſoul.
For let the witling argue all he can,
It is religion ſtill that makes the man.
'Tis *this*, my friend, that ſtreaks our morning bright;
'Tis *this* that gilds the horrors of our night.
When wealth forſakes us, and when friends are few;
When friends are faithleſs, or when foes purſue;
'Tis *this* that wards the blow, or ſtills the ſmart;
Diſarms affliction, or repels its dart;
Within the breaſt bids pureſt rapture riſe;
Bids ſmiling conſcience ſpread her cloudleſs ſkies.
When the ſtorm thickens, and the thunder rolls,
When the earth trembles to th' affrighted poles;

The

‡ Referring to the *Winter-piece*.

The virtuous mind, nor doubts nor fears assail;
For storms are zephyrs, or a gentler gale.
And when disease obstructs the lab'ring breath,
When the heart sickens, and each pulse is death;
E'en then religion shall sustain the just,
Grace their last moments, nor desert their dust.
August 4. 1748.

AS some *new star* attracts th' admiring sight,
His splendors pouring thro' the fields of light,
Whole nights, delighted with th' unusual rays,
On the fair heav'nly *visitant* we gaze:
So thy fam'd *volumes* sweet surprise impart;
Mark'd by all eyes, and felt in ev'ry heart.
Nature, inform'd by thee, new paths has trod,
And rises, *here*, a preacher for her GOD;
By fancy's aids, mysterious heights she tries,
And lures us, by our senses, to the skies.
To deck thy *style* collected graces throng,
Bold as the pencil's *tints*, yet soft as *song*.
In themes, how rich thy vein! how pure thy choice!
Transcripts of truths, own'd clear from scripture's voice:
Thy judgment these, and piety attest,
Transcripts—read only fairer in thy breast.
There, what thy works would shew, we best may see,
And all they *teach* in doctrine, *lives* in thee.
Oh!—might they live!—Our pray'rs their strife engage;
But thy fix'd languors yield us sad presage.
In vain skill'd *med'cine* tries her healing art:
Disease, long foe, entrenches at thy heart.
Yet on new labours still thy mind is prone,
For a world's good too thoughtless of thy own.
Active, like day's kind orb, life's course you run,
Its sphere still glorious, tho' a *setting sun*.
Redemption opes thee wide her healing plan,
Health's *only* balm, her sov'reign'st gift to man.

Theme

Themes ſweet like theſe thy ardors, freſh, excite:
Warm at the ſoul, they nerve thy hand to write;
Make thy try'd virtues in their charms appear,
Patience, rais'd *hope*, firm *faith*, and *love* ſincere;
Like a big conſtellation, bright they glow,
And beam out lovelier by thy *night* of wo.
Known were thy merits to the Public long,
Ere own'd thus feebly in my humble ſong.
Damp'd are my fires; my heart dark cares depreſs;
A heart, too feeling from its own diſtreſs.
Proud on thy friendſhip, yet to build my fame,
I gain'd my page * a ſanction from *thy name*.
Weak theſe returns (by gratitude tho' led)
Where *mine* ſhall in thy fav'rite leaves be read.
Yet o'er my conſcious meanneſs hope prevails;
Love gives me merit, where my genius fails.
On *its* ſtrong baſe my ſmall deſert I raiſe,
Averſe to flatt'ry, as unſkill'd to praiſe.

Mile-End Green, MOSES BROWNE.
Feb. 23. 1749.

WHence flow theſe ſolemn ſounds? this raptur'd ſtrain?
Cherubic notes my wond'ring ear detain!
Yet 'tis a mortal's voice: 'tis HERVEY ſings:
Sublime he ſoars on Contemplation's wings:
In ev'ry period breathes ecſtatic thought.
HERVEY, 'twas heav'n thy ſacred leſſons taught.
Celeſtial viſions bleſs thy ſtudious hours,
Thy lonely walks, and thy ſequeſter'd bow'rs.
What fav'ring pow'r, diſpenſing ſecret aids,
Thy cavern'd cell, thy curtain'd couch, pervades?
Still hov'ring near, obſervant of thy themes,
In whiſpers prompts thee, or inſpires thy dreams?
JESUS! effulgence of paternal light!
Ineffably divine! ſupremely bright!

Whoſe

Whose energy according worlds attest,
Kindled these ardors in thy glowing breast.
We catch thy flame, as we thy page peruse;
And faith in ev'ry object JESUS views.
We in the bloomy breathing garden trace
Somewhat—like emanations of his grace:
Yet must all sweetness and all beauty yield,
Idume's grove, and *Sharon*'s flow'ry field,
Compar'd with JESUS: meanly, meanly shows
The brightest lily, faint the loveliest rose.

Divine instructor! lead thro' midnight-glooms,
To moralizing stars, and preaching tombs:
Thro' the still void a Saviour's voice shall break,
A ray from JACOB's star the darkness streak:
To him the fairest scenes their lustre owe;
His cov'nant brightens the celestial bow;
His vast benevolence profusely spreads
The yellow harvests, and the verdant meads.

Thy pupil, HERVEY, a Redeemer finds
In boundless oceans, and in viewless winds:
He reins at will the furious blasts, and guides
The rending tempests, and the roaring tides.
O give, my soul, thy welfare to his trust:
Who rais'd the world, can raise thy sleeping dust!
He will, he will, when nature's course is run,
'Midst falling stars, and an extinguish'd sun;
He will with myriads of his saints appear.
O may I join them, tho' the meanest there!

Tho' nearer to the throne my HERVEY sings;
Tho' I at humbler distance strike the strings;
Yet both shall mingle in the same employ,
Both drink the fulness of eternal joy.

Clerkenwell Green, JOHN DUICK.
Feb. 24. $17\frac{40}{50}$.

WHat numbers of our race survey
The monarch of the golden day,

Night's

Night's ample canopy unfurl'd,
In gloomy grandeur round the world,
The earth in ſpring's embroid'ry dreſt,
And ocean's ever-working breaſt!
And ſtill no grateful honours riſe
To him who ſpread the ſpacious ſkies,
Who hung this air-ſuſpended ball,
And lives, and reigns, and ſhines, in all!
To chace our ſenſual fogs away,
And bright to pour th' eternal ray
Of Deity inſcrib'd around
Wide nature to her utmoſt bound,
Is HERVEY's taſk; and well his ſkill
Celeſtial can the taſk fulfill:
Aſcending from theſe ſcenes below,
Ardent the Maker's praiſe to ſhow,
His ſacred contemplations ſoar,
And teach our wonder to adore.
Now he ſurveys the realms beneath,
The realms of horror, and of death;
Now entertains his vernal hours
In flow'ry walks, and blooming bow'rs;
Now hails the black-brow'd night, that brings
Æthereal dews upon her wings;
Now marks the planets, as they roll
On burning axles round the pole:
While *tombs*, and *flow'rs*, and *ſhades*, and *ſtars*,
Unveil their ſacred characters
Of juſtice, wiſdom, pow'r, and love;
And lift the ſoul to realms above,
Where dwells the GOD, in glory crown'd,
Who ſends his boundleſs influence round.
So *Jacob*, in his bliſsful dreams,
Array'd in heav'n's refulgent beams,
Saw from the ground a ſcale ariſe,
Whoſe ſummit mingled with the ſkies;
Angels were pleas'd to paſs the road,
The ſtage to earth, and path to GOD.

Hervey, proceed: for nature yields
Freſh treaſure in her ample fields;
And in ſeraphic ecſtaſy
Still bear us to the throne on high.
Ocean's wild wonders next explore,
His changing ſcenes, and ſecret ſtore;
Or let dire *Earthquake* claim thy toil,
Earthquake, that ſhakes a guilty iſle.
So, if ſmall things may ſhadow forth,
Dear man, thy labours, and thy worth,
The bee upon the flow'ry lawn
Imbibes the lucid drops of dawn,
Works them in his myſterious mould,
And turns the common dew to gold.

London, THOMAS GIBBONS.
May 26, 1750.

DElightful author! whom the ſaints inſpire!
And whiſp'ring angels with their ardors fire!
From *youth* like mine, wilt thou accept of praiſe?
Or ſmile with candor on a ſtrippling's lays?
My little laurel (but a ſhoot at moſt)
Has hardly more than one ſmall wreath to boaſt,
Such as it is—(ah! might it worthier be!)
Its ſcanty foliage all is due to *Thee*.
Oh! if, amongſt the honours of thy brow,
This ſlender circlet may but humbly grow:
If its faint verdure haply may find place—
A foil to others—tho' its own diſgrace;
Accept it, *Hervey*, from a heart ſincere;
And, for the giver's ſake,—the tribute wear.
Thy ſoul-improving works perus'd, what tongue
Can hold from praiſe, or check th' applauſive ſong?
But, ah! from whence ſhall gratitude obtain
Language that may its glowing zeal explain?
How to ſuch wondrous worth adapt a ſtrain?

Deſcrib'd

Deſcrib'd by thee, cold ſepulchres can charm;
Storms calm the ſoul; and freezing winter warm.
Clear'd from her gloomy ſhades, we view pale night
Surrounded with a blaze of *mental* light.
Lo! where ſhe comes! all ſilent! penſive! ſlow!
On her dark robe unnumber'd meteors glow!
High on her head a ſtarry crown ſhe wears!
Bright in her hand the lamp of Reaſon bears!
Smiling,—behold! ſhe points the ſoul to heav'n,
And bids the weeping ſinner be forgiv'n!
But when thy fancy ſhifts this ſolemn ſcene,
And ruddy morning gilds the chearful green;
With ſudden joy we view the proſpect chang'd,
And bluſhing ſweets in beauteous order rang'd.
We ſee the violets; ſmell the dewy roſe,
And each perfume that from the woodbine flows:
A boundleſs perſpective there greets our eyes:
Rich vales deſcend, and verdant mountains riſe.
The ſhepherds cottages, and rural folds:
All, that thy art deſcribes, the eye beholds.
Amazing limner! whence this matchleſs pow'r?
Thy work's a garden!—ev'ry word a flow'r!
Thy lovely tints almoſt the bloom excell,
And none but nature's ſelf can paint ſo well!
Hail, holy man!—henceforth thy work ſhall ſtand
(Like ſome fair column by a maſter-hand,
Which, whilſt it props, adorns the tow'ring pile)
At once to grace, and elevate our *iſle*.
Though ſimple, lofty; though majeſtic, plain;
Whoſe bold deſign the rules of art reſtrain.
In which the niceſt eye ſees nothing wrong;
Though poliſh'd, juſt; and elegant, though ſtrong.

June 24. 1750. St George Molesworth.

IN Pleaſure's lap the muſes long have lain,
And hung, attentive, on her *Syren* ſtrain:

Still

Still toils the bard beneath ſome weak deſign,
And puny thought but halts along the line:
Or tuneful *nothings*, ſtealing on the mind,
Melt into air, nor leave a trace behind.
While to thy rapt'rous proſe, we feel, belong
The ſtrength of wiſdom, and the voice of ſong:
This lifts the torch of ſacred truth on high,
And points the captives to their native ſky.

How falſe the joys, which earth or ſenſe inſpires,
That clog the ſoul, and damp her purer fires!
Truths, which thy ſolemn ſcenes, my friend, declare,
Whoſe glowing colours paint us as we are.
Yet not moroſely ſtern, nor idly gay,
Dull melancholy reigns, or trifles ſway:
Ill wou'd the ſtrains of levity befit,
And ſullen gloom but ſadden all thy wit:
Truth, judgment, ſenſe, imagination, join;
And ev'ry muſe, and every grace, is thine.
Religion prompting the true end of man,
Conſpiring genius executes the plan;
Strong to convince, and elegant to charm,
Plaintive to melt, or paſſionate to warm.
Rais'd by degrees, we elevate our aim,
And grow immortal as we catch thy flame;
True piety informs our languid hearts,
And all the vitious, and the vain departs.
So, when foul-ſpreading fogs creep ſlowly on,
Blot the fair morn, and hide the golden ſun;
Ardent he pours the boundleſs blaze of day,
Rides through the ſky, and ſhines the miſt away.

O, had it been th' Almighty's gracious will,
That I had ſhar'd a portion of thy ſkill:
Had this poor breaſt receiv'd the heav'nly beam,
Which ſpreads its luſtre thro' thy various theme;
That ſpeaks deep leſſons from the ſilent *tomb*.
And crowns thy *garden* with freſh-ſpringing bloom;
Or, piercing thro' *creation*'s ample whole,
Now ſooths the *night*, or gilds the *ſtarry pole*;

Or marks how *Winter* calls her howling train,
Her ſnows and ſtorms, that deſolate the plain;
With thee the Muſe ſhall trace the pleaſing road,
That leads from nature up to nature's God;
Humble to learn, and, as ſhe knows the more,
Glad to obey, and happy to adore.

Northampton,
Aug. 25. 1750.

PETER WHALLEY.

On

On the Rev. Mr JAMES HERVEY*'s Picture, by the Rev. Mr* JOHN NIXON, A. M. *Rector of* Cold Higham, *in* Northamptonſhire.

WILLIAMS! 'tis yours to bid the canvas wear,
By art illuſive, *Hervey*'s form and air.
Oh! with like happy labour could I trace
Each virtue, each exalted Chriſtian grace,
Each heav'nly gift, with which his ſoul was bleſt,
And fix the bright aſſemblage in my breaſt:
Then how tranſcendent far wou'd be *my* plan,
You point his mimic SHADE:—*I'd live* the MAN.

MEDI-

MEDITATIONS

AMONG THE

TOMBS.

Every Stone that we look upon in this Repoſitory of paſt Ages, is both an Entertainment, *and a* Monitor.

Plain-Dealer, Vol. I. N° 42.

TO

Miſs *R------ T------*.

MADAM,

THESE Reflections, the ONE on the *deepeſt*, the OTHER on the *gayeſt* ſcenes of nature, when they proceeded privately from the *pen*, were addreſſed to a lady of the moſt valuable endowments: who crowned all her other endearing qualities, by a fervent love of CHRIST, and an exemplary conformity to his divine pattern. She, alas! lives no longer on earth; unleſs it be in the honours of a diſtinguiſhed character, and in the bleeding remembrance of her acquaintance.

IT is impoſſible, Madam, to wiſh you a richer bleſſing, or a more ſubſtantial happineſs, than that the ſame ſpirit of unfeigned *faith*, the ſame courſe of undefiled *religion*, which have enabled

her to triumph over death, may both animate and adorn your life. And you will permit me to declare, that my chief inducement in requesting your acceptance of the following Meditations, now they make a public appearance from the *press*, is, that they are designed to cultivate the same sacred *principle*, and to promote the same excellent *practice*.

LONG, Madam, may you *bloom* in all the vivacity and amiableness of youth, like the charming subject of one of these contemplations. But at the same time remember, that, with regard to such inferior accomplishments, you must one day *fade*, (may it prove some very remote period!) like the mournful objects of the other. This consideration will prompt you to go on as you have begun, in adding the *meekness* of *wisdom*, and all the *beauties* of *holiness*, to the graces of an engaging person, and the refinements of a polite education.

AND might---O! might the ensuing hints furnish you with the least assistance, in prosecuting so desirable an end: might they contribute, in any degree, to establish your faith, or elevate your devotion; they would, then, administer to the author such a satisfaction, as applause cannot give, nor censure take away: A satisfaction, which I should be able to enjoy, even in those

awful

awful moments, when all that captivates the eye is ſinking in darkneſs, and every glory of this lower world diſappearing for ever.

THESE wiſhes, Madam, as they are a moſt agreeable employ of my thoughts, ſo they come attended with this additional circumſtance of pleaſure, that they are alſo the ſincereſt expreſſion of that very great eſteem, with which I am,

MADAM,

Your moſt obedient,

Moſt humble ſervant,

Weſton-Favell, *near*
Northampton,
May 20. 1746.

JAMES HERVEY.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

THIRD EDITION.

I MUST intreat the purchasers of the former *editions, to excuse the freedom I have taken, in making several considerable additions to* this. *It has been done at the persuasion of some judicious friends, who apprehended the piece might be more useful, and less unworthy of the public patronage, if it touched upon some very interesting subjects, hitherto omitted. As I had no* views, *but to render the performance more pleasing and serviceable; no reader, I hope, will be offended at my* practice, *or complain of it as* injurious. *Nevertheless, as I would willingly avoid whatever might seem to stand in need of an* APOLOGY, *I desire leave to declare. That no* future *enlargements, or alterations, shall be suffered to depretiate what, with the deepest gratitude for their past encouragement, I* now *commit to the candour of the public.*

PRE-

PREFACE.

THE first of these occasional meditations begs leave to remind my readers of their latter end; *and would invite them to set, not their houses only, but, which is inexpressibly more needful, their souls, in order: that they may be able, thro' all the intermediate stages, to look forward upon their approaching exit, without any* anxious apprehensions; *and, when the great change commences, may bid adieu to terrestrial things, with all the* calmness *of a chearful resignation, with all the* comforts *of a well-grounded faith.*

The other attempts to sketch out some little traces of the all-sufficiency *of our* Redeemer, *for the grand and gracious purposes of everlasting salvation; that a sense of his unutterable dignity, and infinite perfections, may incite us to regard him with sentiments of the most profound* veneration; *to long for an assured interest in his merits, with all the ardency of* desire; *and to trust in his powerful mediation, with an* affiance *not to be shaken by any temptations, not to be shared with any performances of our own.*

I flatter myself, that the thoughts conceived among the tombs, *may be welcome to the* serious *and* humane *mind: Because, as there are few who have not consigned the remains of some dear* relations,

tions, *or honoured* friends, *to thoſe ſilent repoſitories; ſo there are none but muſt be ſenſible, that this is the* houſe appointed for all living; *and that they themſelves are ſhortly to remove into the ſame ſolemn manſions ——And who would not turn aſide for a while, from the moſt favourite amuſements, to view the* place *where his once loved* companions *lie? Who would not ſometimes ſurvey thoſe* apartments, *where he* himſelf *is to take up an* abode, *till time ſhall be no more?*

As to the other little eſſay, may I not humbly preſume, that the very ſubject itſelf will recommend the remarks? For who is not delighted with the proſpect of the blooming creation, and even charmed with the delicate attractions *of flowers? Who does not covet to aſſemble them in the garden, or wear them in a noſegay? Since this is a paſſion ſo univerſal, who would not be willing to render it productive of the ſublimeſt improvement!——This piece of* holy frugality *I have ventured to ſuggeſt, and endeavoured to exemplify, in the ſecond letter; that, while the hand is cropping the tranſient beauties of a flower, the attentive mind may be enriching itſelf with ſolid and laſting good.—And I cannot but entertain ſome pleaſing hopes, that the niceſt taſte may receive and reliſh* religious impreſſions, *when they are conveyed by ſuch* lovely monitors; *when the inſtructive leſſons are found, not on the leaves of ſome formidable* folio, *but ſtand legible on the fine* ſarcenet *of a* narciſſus; *when they ſavour not of the* lamp *and* recluſe, *but come breathing from the fragrant boſom of a* jonquil.

M E-

MEDITATIONS

AMONG THE

TOMBS.

In a LETTER to a LADY.

MADAM,

TRAVELLING lately into *Cornwall*, I happened to alight at a conſiderable village in that county; where finding myſelf under an unexpected neceſſity of ſtaying a little, I took a walk to the *church* *. The doors, like the heaven to which they lead, were wide open, and readily admitted an unworthy ſtranger. Pleaſed with the opportunity, I reſolved to ſpend a few minutes under the ſacred roof.

IN

* I had named, in ſome former editions, a particular church, *viz.* KILKHAMPTON; where ſeveral of the monuments, deſcribed in the following pages, really exiſt. But as I thought it convenient to mention ſome caſes *here*, which are not, according to the beſt of my remembrance, referred to in any inſcriptions *there*; I have now omitted the name; that imagination might operate more freely, and the improvement of the reader be conſulted, without any thing that ſhould look like a variation from truth and fact.

In a ſituation ſo retired and awful, I could not avoid falling into a train of Meditations, *ſerious* and *mournfully pleaſing:* which, I truſt, were in ſome degree profitable to *me*, while they poſſeſſed and warmed my thoughts; and if they may adminiſter any ſatisfaction to *you*, Madam, now they are recollected, and committed to writing, I ſhall receive a freſh pleaſure from them.

It was an ancient pile; reared by hands, that, ages ago, were mouldered into duſt.——Situate in the centre of a large *burial-ground;* remote from all the noiſe and hurry of tumultuous life.—The body ſpacious; the ſtructure lofty; the whole magnificently plain. A row of regular pillars extended themſelves through the midſt; ſupporting the roof with ſimplicity, and with dignity.—The light, that paſſed thro' the windows, ſeemed to ſhed a kind of *luminous obſcurity;* which gave every object a grave and venerable air.—The deep *ſilence*, added to the gloomy aſpect, and both heightened by the lonelineſs of the place, greatly increaſed the ſolemnity of the ſcene.—A ſort of *religious dread* ſtole inſenſibly on my mind, while I advanced, all penſive and thoughtful, along the inmoſt iſle; ſuch a dread, as huſhed every ruder paſſion, and diſſipated all the gay images of an alluring world.

Having adored that eternal Majeſty, who, far from being confined to temples made with hands, has heaven for his throne, and the earth for his footſtool,—I took particular notice of a handſome *altar-piece;* preſented, as I was afterwards informed, by the maſter-builders of *Stow* *; out of gratitude, I preſume, to that gracious God,

* The name of a grand ſeat, belonging to the late Earl of *Bath;* remarkable formerly for its excellent workmanſhip, and elegant furniture; once the principal reſort of the quality and gentry of the Weſt; but now demoliſhed, laid even with the

GOD, who carried them thro' their work, and enabled them to "bring forth their top-ſtone with joy."

O! HOW amiable is *gratitude!* eſpecially when it has the ſupreme Benefactor for its object. I have always looked upon gratitude, as the moſt exalted principle that can actuate the heart of man. It has ſomething noble, diſintereſted, and (if I may be allowed the term) generouſly devout. *Repentance* indicates our nature fallen, and *prayer* turns chiefly upon a regard to one's ſelf: But the exerciſes of gratitude ſubſiſted in paradiſe, when there was no fault to deplore; and will be perpetuated in heaven, when "GOD ſhall be all in all."

The language of this ſweet temper is, "I am un-"ſpeakably obliged: what return ſhall I make?"—— And, ſurely, it is no improper expreſſion of an unfeigned thankfulneſs, to decorate our Creator's courts, and *beautify* "the *place* where his honour dwelleth." Of old, the habitation of his feet was glorious: let it not, now, be ſordid or contemptible. It muſt grieve an ingenuous mind, and be a reproach to any people, to have their own houſes wainſcotted with cedar, and painted with vermilion; while the temple of the LORD of hoſts is deſtitute of every decent ornament.

HERE I recollected, and was charmed with *Solomon's* fine addreſs to the Almighty, at the *dedication* of his famous temple. With immenſe charge, and exquiſite ſkill, he had erected the moſt rich and finiſhed ſtructure that the ſun ever ſaw. Yet, upon a review of his work, and a reflection on the tranſcendent perfections of the Godhead, how he exalts the one, and abaſes the other!—The building was too *glorious* for the mightieſt monarch to inhabit; too *ſacred* for unhallowed feet even to enter; yet infinitely too *mean* for the Deity to reſide in. It was, and the royal wor-

the ground, and ſcarce one ſtone left upon another.—So that corn may grow, or nettles ſpring, where *Stow* lately ſtood.

ſhipper acknowledged it to be, a moſt marvellous vouchſafement in uncreated Excellency, to "put his "name there."—The whole paſſage breathes ſuch a delicacy, and is animated with ſuch a ſublimity of ſentiment, that I cannot perſuade myſelf to paſs on, without repeating it. *But will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold! the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much leſs this houſe that I have builded*!*—Incomparable ſaying! worthy the wiſeſt of men. Who would not chuſe to poſſeſs ſuch an elevated devotion, rather than to own all the glittering materials of that ſumptuous edifice?

WE

* 1 *Kings* viii. 27. *But will.*——A fine abrupt beginning, moſt ſignificantly deſcribing the amazement and rapture of the royal prophet's mind!—*GOD:* He uſes no epithet, where writers of inferior diſcernment would have been fond to multiply them; but ſpeaks of the Deity, as an incomprehenſible Being, whoſe perfections and glories are exalted above all praiſe.—*Dwell:* To beſtow on ſinful creatures a propitious look, to favour them with a tranſient viſit of kindneſs; even this were an unutterable obligation. Will he then vouchſafe to fix his abode among them, and take up his ſtated reſidence with them?—*Indeed:* A word, in this connection, peculiarly emphatical; expreſſive of a condeſcenſion, wonderful and extraordinary almoſt beyond all credibility.—*Behold:* intimating the continued, or rather the increaſing ſurpriſe of the ſpeaker, and awakening the attention of the hearer.—*Behold! the heaven:* The ſpacious concave of the firmament, that wide-extended azure circumference, in which worlds unnumbered perform their revolutions, is too ſcanty an apartment for the Godhead.—Nay, *the heaven of heavens:* thoſe vaſtly higher tracts, which lye far beyond the limits of human ſurvey, to which our very thoughts can hardly ſoar; even theſe (unbounded as they are) cannot afford an adequate habitation for JEHOVAH; even theſe dwindle into a point, when compared with the infinitude of his eſſence; even theſe "are as no-"thing before him."—*How much leſs* proportionate is this poor diminutive ſpeck (which I have been erecting and embelliſhing) to ſo auguſt a Preſence, ſo immenſe a Majeſty!

WE are apt to be ſtruck with admiration at the ſtatelineſs and grandeur of a maſterly performance in architecture; and, perhaps, on a ſight of the ancient ſanctuary, ſhould have made the *ſuperficial* obſervation of the diſciples; "What manner of ſtones, and what "buildings, are here!"—But what a *nobler* turn of thought, and *juſter* taſte of things, does it diſcover, to join with *Iſrael's* king, in celebrating the condeſcenſion of the divine inhabitant! That the high and lofty One, who fills immenſity with his glory, ſhould, in a peculiar manner, fix his abode there! ſhould *there* manifeſt an extraordinary degree of his benedictive preſence; permit ſinful mortals to approach his Majeſty, and promiſe "to make them joyful in his houſe "of prayer!"—*this* ſhould more ſenſibly affect our hearts, than the moſt curious arrangement of ſtones can delight our eyes.

NAY, the everlaſting GOD does not diſdain to dwell in our *ſouls* by his Holy Spirit; and to make even our *bodies* his temple.—Tell me, ye that frame critical judgments, and balance nicely the diſtinction of things, "Is this moſt aſtoniſhing, or moſt rejoicing!"—He humbleth himſelf, the ſcripture aſſures us, even to behold the things that are in heaven *. 'Tis a moſt condeſcending favour, if HE pleaſes to take the leaſt approving notice of angels and archangels, when they bow down in homage from their celeſtial thrones. Will he then graciouſly regard, will he be united, moſt *intimately united* to poor, polluted, breathing duſt?—Unparalleled honour! invaluable privilege! Be this my portion, and I ſhall not covet crowns, nor envy conquerors.

BUT let me remember, what a *ſanctity* of diſpoſition, and *uprightneſs* of converſation, ſo exalted a relation

* Pſal. cxiii. 6.

lation demands: remember this, "and rejoice with "trembling."—Durſt I commit any iniquity, while I tread theſe hallowed courts? Could the *Jewiſh* high prieſt allow himſelf in any known tranſgreſſion, while he made that ſolemn yearly entrance † into the holy of holies, and ſtood before the immediate preſence of *JEHOVAH?* No, truly. In *ſuch* circumſtances, a thinking perſon muſt ſhudder at the moſt remote ſolicitation to any wilful offence. I ſhould now be ſhocked at the leaſt indecency of behaviour, and am apprehenſive of every appearance of evil.—And why do we not carry this holy jealouſy into all our *ordinary* life? Why do we not, in every place ‡, reverence ourſelves; as perſons dedicated to the Divinity, as *living temples* of the Godhead? For, if we are real, and not merely nominal Chriſtians, the GOD of glory, according to his own promiſe, ‖ *dwells in us, and walks in us.*—O! that this *one* doctrine of our religion might operate with an abiding efficacy upon our conſciences! It would be inſtead of a *thouſand* laws, to regulate our conduct; inſtead of a *thouſand* motives, to quicken us in holineſs. Under the influence of *ſuch* a conviction, we ſhould ſtudy to maintain a purity of intention; a dignity of action; and to walk worthy of that tranſcendently majeſtic Being, who admits us to a fellowſhip with himſelf, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST.

THE

† Heb. ix. 7.

‡ ——————————— παντων δε μαλιϛ' αισχυνεο σ' αυτον, was the favourite maxim of *Pythagoras*, and ſuppoſed to be one of the beſt moral precepts ever given to the Heathen world. With what ſuperior force, and very ſingular advantage, does the argument take place in the Chriſtian ſcheme! where we are taught to regard ourſelves, not merely as *intellectual beings*, who have *reaſon* for our monitor; but as *conſecrated creatures*, who have a GOD of the moſt conſummate perfection ever *with* us, ever *in* us.

‖ 2 Cor. vi. 16.

THE next thing which engaged my attention, was the *lettered floor*. The pavement, ſomewhat like *Ezekiel*'s roll, was written over from one end to the other. I ſoon perceived the compariſon to hold good in another reſpect; and the inſcriptions to be matter of "*mourning*, *lamentation*, *and wo* *." They ſeemed to court my obſervation; ſilently inviting me to read them. And what would theſe dumb monitors inform me of?—"That, beneath their little circumferences, "were depoſited ſuch and ſuch pieces of clay, which "once *lived*, and *moved*, and *talked*: that they had "received a charge to preſerve their names, and were "the remaining truſtees of their memory."

AH! ſaid I, is ſuch my ſituation! the adorable Creator around me, and the bones of my fellow-creatures under me! Surely, then, I have great reaſon to cry out, with the revering patriarch, *How dreadful is this place* †! Serioufneſs and devotion become this houſe for ever. May I never enter it lightly or irreverently; but with a profound awe, and godly fear!

O! that they were wiſe ‡! ſaid the inſpired penman. It was his laſt wiſh for his dear people. He breathed it out, and gave up the ghoſt.—But what is wiſdom? It conſiſts not in refined ſpeculations, accurate reſearches into nature, or an univerſal acquaintance with hiſtory. The divine lawgiver ſettles this important point, in his next aſpiration: *O! that they underſtood this!* that they had right apprehenſions of their ſpiritual intereſts, and eternal concerns! that they had eyes to diſcern, and inclinations to purſue, the things which belong to their peace!—But how ſhall they attain this valuable knowledge? I ſend them not, adds the illuſtrious teacher, to turn over all the volumes of literature: they may acquire, and much more expedi-

* Ezek. ii. 10. † Gen. xxviii. 17. ‡ Deut. xxxii. 29.

peditiously, this science of life, *by considering their latter end.* This spark of heaven is often lost under the glitter of pompous erudition, but shines clearly in the gloomy mansions of the tomb. Drowned is this gentle whisper amidst the *noise* of secular affairs, but speaks distinctly in the *retirements* of serious contemplation.—Behold! how providentially I am brought to the school of wisdom *! The grave is the most faithful † master; and these instances of mortality, the most instructive lessons.—Come then, *calm attention*, and compose my thoughts; come, thou *celestial Spirit*, and enlighten my mind; that I may so peruse these awful pages, as to become "wise unto salvation."

EXAMINING the records of mortality, I found the memorials of a ‡ *promiscuous* multitude. They were huddled, at least they rested together, without any regard to rank or seniority. None were ambitious of the uppermost rooms, or chief seats, in this house of mourning. None entertained fond and eager expectations of being honourably greeted in their darksome cells. The man of years and experience, reputed as an oracle in his generation, was content to lye down at the feet of a babe. In this house appointed for all living, the servant was equally accommodated, and lodged in the same story, with his master. The *poor indigent* lay as softly, and slept as soundly, as the most *opulent possessor*. All the distinction that subsisted was a grassy

* The man how wise, who, sick of gaudy scenes,
Is led by choice to take his fav'rite walk
Beneath death's gloomy, silent, cypress shades,
Unpierc'd by vanity's fantastic ray!
To read his monuments, to weigh his dust,
Visit his vaults, and dwell among the tombs!
Night-Thoughts.

† Wait the great teacher Death. POPE.

‡ *Mista senum ac juvenum densantur funera.* HOR.

a graſſy hillock, bound with oſiers; or a ſepulchral ſtone, ornamented with imagery.

WHY then, ſaid my working thoughts, O! why ſhould we raiſe ſuch a mighty ſtir about *ſuperiority* and *precedence*, when the next remove will reduce us all to a ſtate of equal meanneſs? Why ſhould we exalt ourſelves, or debaſe others; ſince we muſt all, one day, be upon a common level, and blended together in the ſame undiſtinguiſhed duſt? O! that this conſideration might humble my own, and others pride; and ſink our imaginations as low, as our habitation will ſhortly be?

AMONG theſe confuſed relics of humanity, there are, without doubt, perſons of *contrary* intereſts, and *contradicting* ſentiments. But death, like ſome able days-man, has laid his hand on the contending parties, and brought all their differences to an * amicable concluſion. Here enemies, ſworn enemies, dwell together in unity. They drop every embittered thought, and forget that they once were foes. Perhaps, their crumbling bones *mix*, as they *moulder;* and thoſe who, while they lived, ſtood aloof in irreconcileable variance, here fall into mutual embraces, and even incorporate with each other in the grave.—O! that we might learn from theſe friendly aſhes, not to perpetuate the memory of *injuries;* not to foment the fever of *reſentment;* nor cheriſh the turbulence of *paſſion;* that there may be as little animoſity and diſagreement in the land of the living, as there is in the congregation of the dead!—But I ſuſpend for a while ſuch *general* obſervations, and addreſs myſelf to a more *particular* inquiry.

YONDER

* *Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta,*
Pulveris exigui jactu compreſſa quieſcent. VIRG.

YONDER *white ſtone*, emblem of the innocence it covers, informs the beholder of one, who breathed out its tender ſoul almoſt in the inſtant of receiving it.—There, the peaceful *infant*, without ſo much as knowing what labour and vexation mean, " * lyes ſtill and " is quiet; it ſleeps and is at reſt." Staying only to waſh away its native impurity in the laver of regeneration, it bid a ſpeedy adieu to time, and terreſtrial things.—What did the little haſty ſojourner find ſo forbidding and diſguſtful in our upper world, to occaſion its precipitant exit? 'Tis written, indeed, of its ſuffering Saviour, that when he had taſted the vinegar mingled with gall, he would not drink †. And did our new-come ſtranger begin to *ſip* the cup of life; but, perceiving the bitterneſs, turn away its head, and refuſe the *draught?* Was this the cauſe why the wary babe only opened its eyes; juſt looked on the light, and then withdrew into the more inviting regions of undiſturbed repoſe!

Happy voyager! no ſooner launched, than *arrived* at the haven ‡!—But more eminently happy *they*, who have paſſed the waves, and weathered all the ſtorms, of a troubleſome and dangerous world! who, " through many tribulations, have entered into the " kingdom of heaven;" and thereby brought *honour* to their divine convoy, adminiſtered *comfort* to the companions of their toil, and left an inſtructive *example* to ſucceeding pilgrims.

Highly favoured probationer! accepted, without being exerciſed!—It was thy peculiar privilege, not to *feel* the ſlighteſt of thoſe evils, which *oppreſs* thy ſurviving kindred; which frequently fetch groans from the

* Job iii. 13. † Matth. xxvii. 34.

‡ Happy the babe, who privileg'd by Fate,
To ſhorter labour, and a lighter weight,
Receiv'd but yeſterday the gift of breath,
Order'd to morrow to return to death. PRIOR's *Sol.*

the moſt manly fortitude, or moſt elevated faith. The arrows of Calamity, barbed with anguiſh, are *often* fixed deep in our choiceſt comforts. The fiery darts of Temptation, ſhot from the hand of Hell, are *always* flying in ſhowers around our integrity. To thee, ſweet babe, both theſe diſtreſſes and dangers were alike unknown.

Conſider this, ye *mourning parents*, and dry up your tears. Why ſhould you lament, that your little ones are crowned with victory, before the ſword was drawn, or the conflict begun?—Perhaps, the ſupreme Diſpoſer of events foreſaw ſome inevitable ſnare of temptation forming, or ſome dreadful ſtorm of adverſity impending. And why ſhould you be ſo diſſatisfied with that *kind precaution*, which houſed your pleaſant plant, and removed into ſhelter a tender flower, before the thunders roared; before the lightnings flew; before the tempeſt poured its rage?—O remember! they are not loſt, but *taken away from the evil to come* *.

At the ſame time, let *ſurvivors*, doomed to *bear the heat and burden of the day*, for their encouragement reflect,—that it is more honourable to have entered the liſts, and to have fought the good fight, before they come off conquerors. They who have bore the croſs, and ſubmitted to afflictive providences, with a chearful reſignation, have girded up the loins of their mind, and performed their Maſter's will with an honeſt and perſevering fidelity;—theſe, having glorified their Redeemer on earth, will, probably, be as ſtars of the *firſt magnitude* in heaven. They will ſhine with brighter beams, be repleniſhed with ſtronger joys, in their LORD's everlaſting kingdom.

HERE lyes the grief of a fond mother, and the blaſted expectation of an indulgent father.—The *youth* grew up, like a well-watered plant; he ſhot deep, roſe high, and

* Iſa. lvii. 1.

and bid fair for manhood. But just as the *cedar* began to tower, and promised ere long to be the pride of the wood, and prince among the neighbouring trees;—behold! the *axe* is laid unto the root; the fatal blow struck; and all its branching honours tumbled to the dust.—And did he fall alone? No: the hopes of his father that begat him, and the pleasing prospects of her that bare him, fell, and were crushed together with him.

Doubtless it would have pierced one's heart, to have beheld the tender parents following the breathless youth to his long home. Perhaps drowned in tears, and all overwhelmed with sorrows, they stood, like weeping statues, on this very spot.—Methinks, I see the deeply distressed mourners attending the sad solemnity. How they wring their hands, and pour floods from their eyes!—Is it fancy? or do I really hear the passionate *mother*, in an agony of affliction, taking her final leave of the darling of her soul? Dumb she remained, while the awful obsequies were performing; dumb with grief, and leaning upon the partner of her woes. But now the inward anguish struggles for vent; it grows too big to be repressed. She advances to the brink of the grave. All her soul is in her eyes. She fastens one more look upon the *dear doleful* object, before the pit shuts its mouth upon him. And as she looks, she cries;—in broken accents, interrupted by many a raising sob, she cries,—"Farewell, my son! my "son! my only beloved! would to GOD I had died "for thee?—Farewell, my child! and farewell all "my earthly happiness!—I shall never more see good "in the land of the living.—Attempt not to comfort "me.—I will go mourning all my days, till my grey "hairs come down, with sorrow, to the grave."

From this affecting representation, let parents be convinced, how highly it concerns them to cultivate the *morals*, and secure the *immortal* interests of their children.—If you really love the offspring of your own bodies;

bodies; if your bowels yearn over thoſe amiable pledges of conjugal endearment; ſpare no pains; give all diligence, I intreat you, "to bring them up in the "nurture and admonition of the LORD." Then may you have joy in their life, or conſolation in their death. If their ſpan is *prolonged*, their unblameable and uſeful conduct will be the ſtaff of your age, and a balm for declining nature. Or, if the number of their years be cut off in the *midſt*, you may commit their remains to the duſt, with much the ſame comfortable expectations, as you ſend the ſurvivors to places of genteel education. You may commit them to the duſt, with chearing hopes of receiving them again to your arms, *inexpreſſibly improved* in every noble and endearing accompliſhment.

'Tis certainly a *ſevere trial*, and much more afflictive than I am able to imagine, to reſign a lovely blooming creature, ſprung from your own loins, to the gloomy receſſes of corruption. *Thus* to reſign him, after having been long dandled upon your knees, united to your affections by a thouſand ties of tenderneſs; and now become both the delight of your eyes, and the ſupport of your family!—to have ſuch a one torn from your boſom, and thrown into darkneſs, doubtleſs, it muſt be like a dagger in your hearts.—But O! how much more cutting to you, and confounding to the child, to have the ſoul ſeparated from GOD; and, for *ſhameful ignorance*, or *early impiety*, tranſmitted to places of eternal torment! How would it aggravate your diſtreſs, and add a diſtracting *emphaſis* to all your ſighs, if you ſhould follow the pale corpſe with theſe bitter reflections!—"This dear creature, though long ago ca-"pable of knowing good from evil, is gone *out* of the "world, before it had learned the great deſign of "coming *into* it. A ſhort-lived momentary exiſtence "it received from me; but no good inſtructions, no ho-"ly admonitions, nothing to further its well-being in "that everlaſting ſtate, upon which it is now entered.

"The

" The *poor body* is conſigned to the coffin, and carried " out to conſume away, in the cold and ſilent grave. " And what reaſon have I to ſuppoſe, that the *precious* " *ſoul* is in a better condition? May I not juſtly fear, " that, ſentenced by the righteous Judge, it is going, " or gone away, into the pains of endleſs puniſhment? " —Perhaps, while I am *bewailing* its untimely depar- " ture, it may be *curſing*, in outer darkneſs, that " ever to be deplored, that moſt calamitous day, when " it was born of ſuch a careleſs, ungodly parent, as " I have been."

Nothing, I think, but the gnawings of that worm which never dies, can equal the anguiſh of theſe ſelf-condemning thoughts. The tortures of a rack muſt be an eaſy ſuffering, compared with the ſtings and horror of ſuch a remorſe.—How earneſtly do I wiſh, that as many as are intruſted with the management of children, would take timely care to prevent theſe ſcourges of conſcience, by endeavouring to conduct their minds into an early *knowledge* of Chriſt, and a cordial *love* of his truth!

On this hand is lodged one, whoſe ſepulchral ſtone tells a moſt pitiable tale indeed! Well may the *little images*, reclined over the ſleeping aſhes, hang down their heads with that penſive air! None can conſider ſo mournful a ſtory, without feeling ſome touches of ſympathizing concern.—His *age* twenty-eight; his death *ſudden;* himſelf cut down in the prime of life, amidſt all the vivacity and vigour of manhood; while " his " breaſts were full of milk, and his bones moiſtened " with marrow."—Probably, he entertained no apprehenſions of the evil hour. And indeed, who could have ſuſpected, that ſo bright a ſun ſhould go down at noon? To human appearance, his hill ſtood ſtrong. Length of days ſeemed written in his ſanguine countenance. He ſolaced himſelf with the proſpect of a long, long ſeries of earthly ſatisfactions.—When, lo! an unexpected

expected ſtroke deſcends! deſcends from that mighty arm, which "overturneth the mountains by their "roots; and cruſhes the imaginary hero, * *before the* "*moth;*" as quickly, and more eaſily, than our fingers preſs ſuch a feeble fluttering inſect to death.

PERHAPS, the *nuptial joys* were all he thought on.—Were not ſuch the breathings of his enamoured ſoul? "Yet a very little while, and I ſhall poſſeſs the utmoſt "of my wiſhes. I ſhall call my charmer mine; and, "in *her*, enjoy whatever my heart can crave."—In the midſt of ſuch enchanting views, had ſome faithful friend but ſoftly reminded him of an opening grave, and the end of all things; how *unſeaſonable* would he have reckoned the admonition! Yet, though all warm with life, and rich in viſionary bliſs, he was even then tottering upon the brink of both.—Dreadful viciſſitude! to have the *bridal* † feſtivity turned into the *funeral*

* *Job* iv. 19. מלפני עש—*Ad inſtar, ad modum, tineæ.*—I retain this interpretation, both as it is moſt ſuitable to my purpoſe, and as it is patronized by ſome eminent commentators, eſpecially the celebrated *Schultens.* Though I cannot but give the preference to the opinion of a judicious friend, who would render the paſſage more literally, *Before the face of a moth*, making it to repreſent a creature ſo exceedingly frail, that even a moth, flying againſt it, may daſh it to pieces.—Which, beſides its cloſer correſpondence with the exact import of the *Hebrew*, preſents us with a much finer image of the moſt extreme imbecillity. For it certainly implies a far greater degree of weakneſs, to be cruſhed by the feeble flutter of the feebleſt creature, than only to be cruſhed as eaſily as that creature, by the hand of man.—The *French* verſion is very expreſſive and beautiful; *à la rencontre d'un vermiſſeau.*

† A diſtreſs of this kind is painted in very affecting colours by *Pliny*, in an epiſtle to *Marcellinus*; *O triſte plane acerbumque funus! O morte ipſa mortis tempus indignius! Jam deſtinata erat egregio juveni; jam electus nuptiarum dies; jam nos advocati. Quod gaudium quo mœrore mutatum eſt! Non poſſum exprimere verbis, quantum animo vulnus acceperim, quum audivi*

ral ſolemnity! Deplorable misfortune! to be ſhipwrecked in the very haven! and to periſh even in ſight of happineſs!—What a memorable proof is here of the frailty of man, in his beſt eſtate! Look, O! look on this monument, ye *gay* and *careleſs!* attend to this date; and boaſt no more of to-morrow!

Who can tell, but the *bride-maids*, girded with gladneſs, had prepared the marriage-bed? had decked it with the richeſt covers, and dreſſed it in pillows of down? When,—oh! truſt not in youth or ſtrength, or in any thing mortal; for there is nothing certain, nothing to be depended on, beneath the unchangeable GOD;—Death, relentleſs death, is making him another kind of bed in the duſt of the earth. Unto this he muſt be conveyed, not with a ſplendid proceſſion of *joyous attendants;* but ſtretched in the *gloomy hearſe*, and followed by a train of mourners. On this he muſt take up a lonely lodging, nor ever be releaſed, "till "the heavens are no more."—In vain does the conſenting *fair-one* put on her ornaments, and expect her ſpouſe. Did ſhe not, like *Siſera*'s mother, look out of the lattice, chide the delays of her beloved; and wonder "why his chariot was ſo long in coming?" little thinking, that the *intended* bridegroom had for ever done with tranſitory things! that now everlaſting cares employ his mind, without one ſingle remembrance of his lovely *Lucinda!*—Go, diſappointed virgin! go, mourn the uncertainty of all created bliſs! Teach thy ſoul to aſpire after a ſure and *immutable felicity!* for the once gay and gallant *Fidelio* ſleeps in other embraces; even in the icy arms of Death! forgetful, eternally forgetful, of the world—and *thee*.

HITHERTO, one is tempted to exclaim againſt the king of terrors, and call him *capriciouſly cruel*. He ſeems,

divi Fundanum ipſum (ut multa luctuoſa dolor invenit) præcipientem, quod in veſtes, margaritas, gemmas, fuerat erogaturus, hoc in thura, et unguenta, et odores, impenderetur.

PLIN. lib. v. epiſt. 26.

ſeems, by beginning at the wrong end of the regiſter, to have inverted the laws of nature. Paſſing over the couch of decrepit age, he has nipped infancy in its *bud*, blaſted youth in its *bloom*, and torn up manhood in its full *maturity*.—Terrible indeed are theſe providences, yet not unſearchable the counſels:

For us they ſicken, and for us they die *.

Such ſtrokes muſt not only grieve the relatives, but *ſurpriſe* the whole neighbourhood. They ſound a powerful alarm to heedleſs dreaming mortals, and are intended as a remedy for our carnal ſecurity. Such paſſing-bells inculcate loudly our LORD's admonition; "Take ye heed, watch, and pray: for ye know not "when the time is,"—We nod, like intoxicated creatures, upon the very verge of a tremendous precipice. Theſe aſtoniſhing diſpenſations are the kind meſſengers of heaven, to *rouſe* us from our *ſupineneſs*, and quicken us into timely circumſpection. I need not, ſurely, accommodate them with language, nor act as their interpreter. Let every one's conſcience be awake, and this will appear their awful meaning:—"O! ye ſons of "men, in the midſt of life you are in death. No ſtate, "no circumſtances, can aſcertain your preſervation a "ſingle moment. So *ſtrong* is the tyrant's arm, that "nothing can reſiſt its force; ſo *true* his aim, that no"thing can elude the blow. *Sudden* as lightning, "ſometimes, is his arrow launched; and wounds, and "kills, in the twinkling of an eye. Never promiſe "yourſelves ſafety in any expedient, but conſtant pre"paration. The fatal ſhafts fly ſo promiſcuouſly, that "none can gueſs the next victim. Therefore *be ye al*"*ways ready: for, in ſuch an hour as ye think not*, the "final ſummons cometh."

Be ye always ready: for in ſuch an hour as ye think not—Important admonition! Methinks, it reverberates from

* Night-Thoughts.

from sepulchre to sepulchre; and addresses me with line upon line, precept upon precept.—The reiterated warning, I acknowledge, is too needful; may co-operating grace render it effectual! The momentous truth, though worthy to be *engraved* on the tables of a most tenacious memory, is but slightly *sketched* on the transient flow of passion. We see our neighbours fall; we turn pale at the shock; and feel, perhaps, a trembling dread. No sooner are they removed from our sight, but, driven in the whirl of business, or lulled in the languors of pleasure, we forget the providence, and neglect its errand. The impression made on our unstable minds, is like the trace of an arrow through the penetrated air, or the path of a keel in the furrowed wave.—Strange stupidity! To cure it, another monitor bespeaks me, from a neighbouring stone. It contains the narrative of an unhappy mortal, snatched from his friends, and hurried to the awful bar; without leisure, either to take a *last farewell* of the one, or to put up so much as a *single prayer* preparatory for the other; killed, according to the usual expression, by a sudden stroke of casualty.

Was it then a random stroke? Doubtless, the blow came from an *aiming*, though invisible hand. GOD presideth over the armies of heaven; GOD ruleth among the inhabitants of the earth; and GOD conducteth what men call *chance*. Nothing, nothing comes to pass through a blind and undiscerning fatality. If accidents happen, they happen according to the exact foreknowledge, and conformably to the determinate counsels, of eternal wisdom. The LORD, with whom are the issues of death, signs the *warrant*, and gives the high commission. The seemingly fortuitous disaster is only the *agent*, or the *instrument* appointed to execute the supreme decree. When the king of *Israel* was mortally wounded, it seems to be a casual shot. *A certain man drew a bow at a venture* *.—*At a venture*, as he

* 1 Kings xxii. 34.

he thought. But his hand was ſtrengthened by an omnipotent aid, and the ſhaft levelled by an unerring eye. So that what we term *caſualty*, is really *providence*, accompliſhing deliberate deſigns, but concealing its own interpoſition.—How comforting this reflection! Admirably adapted, to ſooth the throbbing anguiſh of the mourners, and compoſe their ſpirits into a quiet ſubmiſſion! Excellently ſuited, to diſſipate the fears of godly ſurvivors, and create a calm intrepidity amidſt innumerable perils!

How *thin* is the partition between this world and another? How *ſhort* the tranſition from time to eternity! The partition, nothing more than the breath in our noſtrils; and the tranſition may be made in the twinkling of an eye.—Poor *Chremylus*, I remember, aroſe from the diverſion of a card-table, and dropt into the dwellings of darkneſs.—One night, *Corinna* was all gaiety in her ſpirits, all finery in her apparel, at a magnificent ball. The next night, ſhe lay pale and ſtiff, an extended corpſe, and ready to be mingled with the mouldering dead.—Young *Atticus* lived to ſee his ample and commodious ſeat completed; but not to ſpend one joyous hour under the ſtately roof. The ſaſhes were hung to admit the day; but the maſter's eyes were cloſed in endleſs night. The apartments were furniſhed, to invite ſociety, or adminiſter repoſe; but their lord reſts in the lower parts of the earth, in the ſolitary, ſilent chambers of the tomb. The gardens were planned, and a thouſand elegant decorations deſigned; but alas! their intended poſſeſſor is gone down to "the place of ſkulls;" is gone down to the valley of the ſhadow of death.

While I am recollecting, many, I queſtion not, are experiencing the ſame tragical viciſſitude. The eyes of that ſublime Being,—who ſits upon the circle of the earth, and views all its inhabitants with one comprehenſive glance,—even now behold many tents in affliction; ſuch affliction, as overwhelmed the *Egyptians*

in that fatal night, when the deſtroying angel ſheathed his arrows in all the pride of their ſtrength.—Some, ſinking to the floor from their *eaſy chair;* and deaf even amidſt the piercing ſhrieks of their diſtracted relations.—Some, giving up the ghoſt, as they ſit retired, or lye reclined, under the *ſhady arbour*, to taſte the ſweets of the flowery ſcene.—Some, as they ſail, aſſociated with a *party* of *pleaſure*, along the dancing ſtream, and through the laughing meads Nor is the grim intruder mollified, though wine and muſic flow around.—Some *intercepted*, as they are returning home; and ſome *interrupted*, as they enter upon an important negociation.—Some arreſted, with the gain of *injuſtice* in their hands; and ſome ſurpriſed in the very act of *lewdneſs*, or the attempt of *cruelty*.

Legions, legions of diſaſters, ſuch as no prudence can foreſee, and no care prevent, lye in wait to accompliſh our doom. A *ſtarting horſe* may throw his rider; may at once daſh his body againſt the ſtones, and fling his ſoul into the inviſible world. A *ſtack* of *chimneys* may tumble into the ſtreet, and cruſh the unwary paſſenger under the ruins. Even a ſingle *tile*, dropping from the roof, may be as fatal as the fall of the whole ſtructure.—So frail, ſo very attenuated is the thread of life, that it not only burſts before the *ſtorm*, but breaks even at a *breeze*. The moſt common occurrences, thoſe from which we ſuſpect not the leaſt harm, may prove the weapons of our deſtruction. A grape-ſtone, a deſpicable fly, may be more mortal than *Goliath*, with all his formidable armour.---Nay, if GOD give command, our very *comforts* become *killing*. The air we breathe, is our bane; and the food we eat, the vehicle of death.---That laſt enemy has unnumbered avenues for his approach; yea, lyes entrenched in our very boſom, and holds his fortreſs in the ſeat of our life. The crimſon fluid, which *diſtributes health*, is impregnated with the ſeeds of death. Heat may inflame it, or toil oppreſs it, and make it deſtroy the parts it was deſigned

to

to cheriſh. Some unſeen impediment may obſtruct its paſſage, or ſome unknown violence may divert its courſe; in either of which caſes, it acts the part of a poiſonous draught, or a deadly ſtab.

Ah! in what perils is vain life engag'd!
What ſlight neglects, what trivial faults deſtroy
The hardieſt frame! Of indolence, of toil
We die; of want, of ſuperfluity.
The all-ſurrounding heav'n, the vital air,
Is big with death.

Since then we are ſo liable to be diſpoſſeſſed of this earthly tabernacle, let us look upon ourſelves only as *tenants at will;* and hold ourſelves in perpetual readineſs, to depart at a moment's warning. Without ſuch an *habitual* readineſs, we are like wretches, that ſleep on the top of a maſt, while a horrid gulf yawns, or furious waves rage, below. And where can be the peace, what the ſatisfaction, of ſuch a ſtate?—Whereas, a prepared condition will inſpire a chearfulneſs of temper, not to be diſmayed by any alarming accident; and create a firmneſs of mind, not to be overthrown by the moſt threatening dangers. When the city is fortified with walls, furniſhed with proviſion, guarded by able and reſolute troops; what have the inhabitants to fear? what may they not enjoy? So, juſt ſo, or rather by a much ſurer band, are connected the *real* taſte of life, and the *conſtant* thought of death.

I SAID, *Our very comforts may become killing.*—And ſee the truth inſcribed by the hand, ſealed with the ſignet of fate. The marble, which graces yonder pillar, informs me, that, near it, are depoſited the remains of *Sophronia;* the much-lamented *Sophronia*, who died in *child-bed.*—How often does this calamity happen! The branch ſhoots; but the ſtem withers. The babe ſprings to light; but ſhe that bare him, breathes her laſt. She gives life, but gives it (O pitiable

tiable conſideration!) at the expence of her own; and becomes, at once, a *mother*, and a *corpſe*.—Or elſe, perhaps, ſhe expires in ſevere pangs, and is herſelf a tomb for her infant; while the melancholy complaint of a monarch's wo is the epitaph for them both: *The children are come to the birth, and there is not ſtrength to bring forth* *.—Leſs to be lamented, in my opinion, *this* misfortune than the *other*. Better for the tender ſtranger to be ſtopped in the porch, than to enter only to converſe with affliction. Better to find a grave in the womb, than to be expoſed on a hazardous world, without the guardian of its infantile years, without the faithful guide of its youth.

This monument is diſtinguiſhed by its finer materials, and more delicate appendages. It ſeems to have taken its model from an affluent hand, directed by a generous heart, which thought it could never do enough for the deceaſed.—It ſeems, alſo, to exhibit an *emblematical* picture of *Sophronia*'s perſon and accompliſhments. Is her beauty, or, what is more than beauty, her white-robed innocence, repreſented by the ſnowy *colour?* The *ſurface*, ſmoothly poliſhed, like her amiable temper, and engaging manners. The *whole* adorned, in a well-judged medium between extravagant pomp and ſordid negligence; like her undiſſembled goodneſs, remote from the leaſt oſtentation, yet in all points exemplary.—But ah! how vain were all theſe endearing charms! How vain the luſtre of thy ſprightly eye! how vain the bloom of thy bridal youth! how vain the honours of thy ſuperior birth! how unable to ſecure the lovely poſſeſſor from the *ſavage violence* of death!—How ineffectual the univerſal eſteem of thy acquaintance; the fondneſs of thy tranſported huſband; or even the ſpotleſs integrity of thy character; to prolong thy ſpan, or procure thee a ſhort reprieve!—The concurrence of all theſe circumſtances reminds me of thoſe beautiful and tender lines:

How

* If. xxxvii. 3.

How lov'd, how valu'd *once, avails thee not;*
To whom related, or by whom begot.
A heap of duſt alone remains of thee:
'Tis all THOU *art! and all the* PROUD *ſhall be* * *!*

POPE's *Miſcell.*

Yet,

* Theſe verſes are inſcribed on a ſmall, but elegant monument lately erected in the great church at *Northampton;* which, in the *hieroglyphical* decorations, correſponds with the deſcriptions introduced above: in this circumſtance particularly, that it is dedicated to the memory of an amiable woman, Mrs ANNE STONHOUSE, the excellent wife of my worthy friend Dr STONHOUSE; who has ſeen all the powers of that healing art, to which I, and ſo many others, have been *greatly* indebted, failing in their attempts to preſerve a life *dearer* to him than his own.

Nec proſunt domino, quæ proſunt omnibus, artes. OVID.

No longer his all-healing art avails;
But ev'ry remedy its maſter fails.

In the midſt of this tender diſtreſs, he has ſought ſome kind of conſolation, even from the ſepulchral marble; by teaching it to ſpeak, at once, his eſteem for *her memory;* and his veneration for *that religion*, which ſhe ſo eminently adorned. Nor could this be more ſignificantly done, than by ſummoning up her character, in that conciſe, but comprehenſive ſentence, A SINCERE CHRISTIAN. *Conciſe* enough, to be the motto for a mourning-ring; yet as *comprehenſive*, as the moſt enlarged ſphere of perſonal, ſocial, and religious worth. For whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report, are they not all included in that grand and noble aggregate, *A ſincere Chriſtian?*

The firſt lines, conſidered in ſuch a connection, are wonderfully plaintive and pathetic;

How lov'd, how valu'd *once, avails thee not;*
To whom related, or by whom begot.

They ſound, at leaſt in *my* ears, like the voice of ſorrow mingled with admiration. The ſpeaker ſeems to have been loſt, for a while, in melancholy contemplation; ſuddenly breaks

Yet, tho' unable to divert the ſtroke, Chriſtianity is ſovereign to pluck out the ſting, of death. Is not this the ſilent language of thoſe *lamps* which burn, and of that *heart* which flames; of thoſe *palms* which flouriſh,

breaks out into this abrupt encomium; then melts into tears, and can proceed no farther. Yet, in this caſe, how eloquent is ſilence! While it hints the univerſal eſteem which attended, and the ſuperiority of birth which diſtinguiſhed, the deceaſed *wife*; it expreſſes, beyond all the pomp of words, the yearning affection, and heart-felt affliction, of the ſurviving *huſband*.—Amidſt the group of monumental marbles, which are laviſh of their panegyric; *this*, I think, reſembles the incomparable addreſs of the painter; who, having placed round a beautiful expiring virgin, her friends in all the agonies of grief, repreſented the *unequalled* anguiſh of the *father*, with far greater livelineſs and ſtrength, or rather with an inexpreſſible emphaſis, by drawing a veil over *his* face:

If the laſt lines are a wide departure from the beaten track of our modern epitaphs, and the very reverſe of their high-flown compliments,

A heap of duſt alone remains of thee!
'Tis all THOU *art!—and all the* PROUD *ſhall be!*

they are not without a precedent, and one of the moſt conſummate kind. Since they breathe the very ſpirit of that ſacred elegy, in which all the heart of the hero and the friend ſeems to be diſſolved; *How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war periſhed!* 2 Sam. i. 27.——They remind the reader of that awful leſſon, which was originally dictated by the ſupreme wiſdom; *Duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return*, Gen. iii. 19.——They inculcate, with all the force of the moſt convincing evidence, that ſolemn admonition delivered by the prophet; *Ceaſe ye from man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils; for wherein is HE to be accounted of?* Iſ. ii. 22.

That no reader, however inattentive, might miſtake the ſenſe and deſign of *this* part of the *fourth* line,

'Tis ALL *thou art!*

it is guarded above and beneath.—*Above*, is an expanded book, that ſeems to be waved, with an air of triumph, over the emblem

rish, and of that *crown* which glitters, in the well-imitated and gilded marble? Do they not, to the discerning eye, describe the vigilance of her faith; the fervency of her devotion; her victory over the world; and the celestial diadem, which the LORD, the righteous Judge, shall give her at that day *?

How happy the husband, in such a sharer of his bed, and partner of his fortunes! Their inclinations were nicely-tuned *unisons*, and all their conversation was *harmony*. How silken the yoke to such a pair, and what blessings were twisted with such bands! Every joy was heightened, and every care alleviated. Nothing seemed wanting to consummate their bliss, but a hopeful progeny rising around them.—That they might see themselves multiplied in their little ones; see their mingled graces transfused into their offspring; and feel the glow of their affection *augmented*, by being *reflected* from their children: "Grant us this gift," said their united prayers, "and our satisfactions are crowned; "we request no more."

Alas! how blind are mortals to future events! how unable to discern what is really good †! *Give me children*,

blem of death: which we cannot but suppose to be the volume of inspiration, as it exhibits a sort of *abridgment* of its whole contents, in those animated words; BE YE NOT SLOTHFUL, BUT FOLLOWERS OF THEM, WHO THROUGH FAITH AND PATIENCE INHERIT THE PROMISES, *Heb.* vi. 12.—*Beneath*, that every part might be pregnant with instruction, are those striking reflections; worthy the consideration of the *highest* proficient in knowledge and piety, yet obvious to the understanding of the most *untaught* reader; LIFE, HOW SHORT! ETERNITY, HOW LONG!——May my soul learn the forcible purport of this short lesson, in their contracted span of time! and all eternity will not be too long, to rejoice in having learned it.

* 2 Tim. iv. 8.

† *Nescia mens hominum fati, sortisque futuræ!*
Turno tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum,
Intactum Pallanta; et cum spolia ista diemque
Oderit.— VIRG.

dren, ſaid *Rachel*, *or elſe I die* *. An ardour of impatience altogether unbecoming, and as miſtaken as it was unbecoming. She dies, not by the *diſappointment*, but by the *accompliſhment*, of her deſire.—If children are, to parents, like a flowery chaplet, whoſe beauties bloſſom with ornament, and whoſe odours breathe delight; death, or ſome fell misfortune, may find means to entwine themſelves with the lovely wreath. Whenever our ſouls are poured out, with paſſionate importunity, after any inferior acquiſition; it may be truly ſaid, in the words of our divine Maſter, *Ye know not what ye aſk.*—Does Providence with hold the thing that we long for? It denies in mercy; and only with-holds the occaſion of our miſery, perhaps the inſtrument of our ruin. With a ſickly appetite, we often loath what is wholeſome, and hanker after our bane. Where *imagination* dreams of unmingled ſweets, there *experience* frequently finds the bitterneſs of wo.

Therefore may we covet immoderately, neither this nor that form of earthly felicity; but refer the whole of our condition, to the choice of unerring wiſdom. May we learn to renounce our own will; and be ready to make a ſacrifice of our warmeſt wiſhes, whenever they run counter to the good pleaſure of GOD. For, indeed, as to obey his laws, is to be perfectly free; ſo to *reſign* ourſelves to his diſpoſal, is to *eſtabliſh* our own happineſs, and to be ſecure from fear of evil.

HERE a ſmall and plain ſtone is placed upon the ground; purchaſed, one would imagine, from the little fund, and formed by the hand, of frugality itſelf. Nothing coſtly; not one decoration added; only a very ſhort inſcription; and that ſo effaced, as to be ſcarcely intelligible.—Was the depoſitory unfaithful to its truſt? Or were the letters worn, by the frequent reſort of the ſurviving family, to mourn over the grave of

* Gen. xxx. 1.

of a moſt valuable and beloved relative?—For I perceive, upon a cloſer inſpection, that it covers the remains of a father; a *religious father;* ſnatched from his growing offspring, before they were ſettled in the world, or ſo much as their principles fixed by a thorough education.

THIS, ſure, is the moſt complicated diſtreſs, that has hitherto come under our conſideration. The *ſolemnities* of ſuch a *dying chamber*, are ſome of the moſt melting and melancholy ſcenes imaginable.—There lyes the affectionate huſband; the indulgent parent; the faithful friend; and the generous maſter. He lyes in the laſt extremities, and on the very point of diſſolution. Art has done its all. The raging diſeaſe mocks the power of medicine. It haſtens, with reſiſtleſs impetuoſity, to execute its dreadful errand; to rend aſunder the ſilver cord of life, and the more delicate tie of ſocial attachment, and conjugal affection.

A *ſervant* or two, from a revering diſtance, caſt many a wiſhful look, and condole their honoured maſter in the language of ſighs. The condeſcending mildneſs of his commands was wont to produce an alacrity of obedience, and render their ſervice a pleaſure. The remembrance of both embitters their grief, and makes it trickle plentifully down their honeſt cheeks.—His *friends*, who have ſo often ſhared his joys, and gladdened his mind with their enlivening converſe, now are miſerable comforters. A ſympathizing and mournful pity is all the relief they are able to contribute; unleſs it be augmented by their ſilent prayers for the divine ſuccour, and a word of conſolation ſuggeſted from the ſcriptures *.—Thoſe poor innocents, the *children*, croud

* Texts of ſcripture, proper for ſuch an occaſion; containing promiſes—of ſupport under affliction, *Lam.* iii. 31. *Heb.* xii. 6. 2 *Cor.* iv. 17.—of pardon, *Iſ.* liii. 5. *Iſ.* i. 18. 1 *John* ii. 1, 2. *Acts* x. 43.—of juſtification, *Rom.* v. 9.

croud around the bed; drowned in tears, and almoſt frantic with grief, they ſob out their little ſouls, and paſſionately cry, "Will he leave us? leave us in a helpleſs condition! leave us to an injurious world!"

Theſe ſeparate ſtreams are all united in the diſtreſſed *ſpouſe*, and overwhelm her breaſt with an impetuous tide of ſorrows. In her, the lover weeps, the wife mourns, and all the mother yearns. To her, the loſs is beyond meaſure aggravated, by months and years of delightful ſociety, and exalted friendſhip.—Where, alas! can ſhe meet with ſuch unſuſpected fidelity, or repoſe ſuch unreſerved confidence? where find ſo diſcreet a counſellor; ſo improving an example; and a guardian ſo ſedulouſly attentive to the intereſts of herſelf, and her children?—See! how ſhe hangs over her languiſhing bed; moſt tenderly ſolicitous to prolong a life, important and deſirable far beyond her own; or, if that be impracticable, no leſs tenderly officious to ſooth the laſt agonies of her *dearer ſelf*.—Her hands, trembling under direful apprehenſions, wipe the cold dews from the livid cheeks; and ſometimes ſtay the ſinking head on her gentle arms, ſometimes reſt it on her compaſſionate boſom.—See! how ſhe gazes, with a ſpeechleſs ardor, on the pale countenance and meagre features. Speechleſs her tongue: but ſhe looks unutterable things. While all her ſoft paſſions throb with unavailing fondneſs, and her very ſoul bleeds with exquiſite anguiſh.

The *ſufferer*, all patient and adoring, ſubmits to the divine will; and, by ſubmiſſion, becomes ſuperior to his affliction. He is ſenſibly touched with the diſconſolate ſtate of his attendants; and pierced with an anxious concern for his wife and his children; his wife, who will ſoon be a *deſtitute widow*; his children,

Rom. viii. 33, 34. 2 *Cor.* v. 21.—of victory over death, *Pſal.* xxiii. 4. *Pſal.* lxxiii. 26. 1 *Cor.* xv. 56, 57.—of a happy reſurrection, *John* vi. 42. 2 *Cor.* v. 1. *Rev.* vii. 16, 17.

dren, who will soon be *helpless orphans*. "Yet tho' "cast down, not in despair." He is greatly refreshed by his trust in the everlasting covenant, and his hope of approaching glory. Religion gives a dignity to distress. At each interval of ease, he comforts his very comforters; and suffers with all the majesty of wo.

The soul, just going to abandon the tottering clay, collects all her force, and exerts her *last* efforts. The good man raises himself on his pillow; extends a kind hand to his servants, which is bathed in tears; takes an affecting farewell of his friends; clasps his wife in a feeble embrace; kisses the dear pledges of their mutual love; and then pours all that remains of life and of strength, in the following words:—"I die, "*my* dear *children:* but GOD, the everlasting GOD, "will be with you.—Tho' you lose an earthly pa- "rent, you have a Father in heaven, who lives "for evermore.—Nothing, nothing but an unbelie- "ving heart, and irreligious life, can ever separate "you from the regards of his providence,—from the "endearments of his love."

He could proceed no farther. His heart was full; but utterance failed. After a short pause, with difficulty, great difficulty, he added,——"You, the dear "*partner* of my soul, you are now the only protec- "tor of our orphans.—I leave you under a weight "of cares.—But GOD, who defendeth the cause of "the widow,—GOD, whose promise is faithfulness "and truth,—GOD hath said, *I will never leave "thee, nor forsake thee* *.—This revives my droop- "ing spirits,—let this support the wife of my bosom; "—and now, O Father of compassions, into thy hands "I commend my spirit.——Encouraged by thy pro- "mised goodness, *I leave my fatherless*"——

Here he fainted; fell back upon the bed; and lay, for some minutes, bereft of his senses. As a *taper*, upon

* Heb. xiii. 5.

on the very point of extinction, is ſometimes ſuddendenly rekindled, and leaps into a quivering flame; ſo *life*, before it totally expired, gave a parting ſtruggle, and once more looked abroad from the opening eye-lids.—He would fain have ſpoke, fain have uttered the ſentence he began. More than once he eſſayed: but the organs of ſpeech were become like a broken veſſel; and nothing but the obſtructing phlegm rattled in his throat. His *aſpect*, however, *ſpoke* affection inexpreſſible. With all the father, all the huſband ſtill living in his looks, he takes one more view of thoſe *dear children*, whom he had often beheld with a parental triumph. He turns his dying eyes on that *beloved woman*, whom he never beheld but with a glow of delight. Fixed in this poſture, amidſt ſmiles of love, and under a gleam of heaven, they ſhine out their laſt.

Upon this, the ſilent ſorrow burſts into loud laments. They weep, and refuſe to be comforted. Till ſome length of time had given vent to the exceſs of paſſion; and the conſolations of religion had ſtaunched their bleeding woes. Then the afflicted family ſearch for the ſentence, which fell *unfiniſhed* from thoſe loved, thoſe venerable, and pious lips. They find it recorded by the prophet *Jeremiah*, containing the direction of infinite wiſdom, and the promiſe of unbounded goodneſs; *Leave thy fatherleſs children; I will preſerve them alive; and let thy widows truſt in me* *.—This, now, is the comfort of their life, and the joy of their heart. They treaſure it up in their memories. It is the beſt of *legacies*, and an *inexhauſtible* fund: A fund which will ſupply all their wants, by entailing the bleſſing of heaven on all their honeſt labours.—They are rich, they are happy, in this ſacred pledge of the divine favour. They fear no evil; they want no good; becauſe GOD is their portion, and their guardian GOD.

No

* Jer. xlix. 11.

No sooner turned from one *memento* of my own, and memorial of another's decease, but a second, a third, a long succession of these melancholy monitors, croud upon my sight *.—That which has fixed my observation, is one of a more *grave* and sable *aspect* than the former. I suppose, it preserves the relics of a more aged person. One would conjecture, that he made somewhat of a figure in his station among the living, as his monument does among the funeral marbles. Let me draw near, and inquire of the stone, "*Who*, or *what*, is beneath its surface?"—I am informed, he was once the owner of a considerable estate; which was much improved, by his own application and management: that he left the world in the busy period of life, advanced a little beyond the meridian.

Probably, replied my musing mind, one of those *indefatigable drudges*, who rise early; late take rest; and eat the bread of carefulness; not to secure the loving-kindness of the LORD, not to make provision for any reasonable necessity, but only to *amass* together ten thousand times more than they can possibly *use*.—Did he not lay schemes for enlarging his fortune, and aggrandizing his family? Did he not purpose to join field to field, and add house to house, till his possessions were almost as vast as his desires? that, then, he would § sit down, and enjoy what he had acquired; breathe a while from his toilsome pursuit of things temporal, and, perhaps, think a little of things eternal.

But see the folly of *worldly wisdom!* How silly, how childish, is the sagacity of (what is called) manly and masterly

*——*Plurima mortis imago.* VIRG.

§——*Hac mente laborem*
Sese ferre, senes ut in otia tuta recedant,
Aiunt, cum sibi sint congesta cibaria.— HOR.

masterly prudence, when it contrives more solicitously for TIME, than it provides for ETERNITY! How strangely infatuated are those subtile heads, which weary themselves in concerting measures for *phantoms* of a *day*, and scarce bestow a thought on *everlasting realities!*—When every wheel moves on smoothly; when all the well-disposed designs are ripening apace for execution; and the long-expected crisis of enjoyment seems to approach; behold! GOD from on high laughs at the *Babel-builder*. Death touches the bubble, and it breaks; it drops into nothing. The cobweb, most finely spun indeed, but more easily dislodged, is swept away in an instant; and all the abortive projects are buried in the same grave with their projector. So true is that verdict, which the wisdom from above passes on these *successful unfortunates:* "They walk in "a vain shadow, and disquiet themselves in vain *."

Speak, ye that attended such a one in his last minutes; ye that heard his *expiring sentiments;* did he not cry out, in the language of disappointed sensuality?—"O death! how terrible is thy approach, to a "man immersed in secular cares, and void of all con- "cern for the never-ending *hereafter!* Where, alas! "is the profit, where the comfort, of entering deep "into the knowledge, and of being dexterous in the "dispatch, of earthly affairs; since I have, all the "while, neglected *the one thing needful!* Destructive "mistake! I have been attentive to every inferior "interest; I have laid myself out on the trifles of a "moment; but have disregarded *heaven;* have forgot "*eternal ages!* O! that my days"——Here he was going on to breathe some fruitless wishes, or to form I know not what ineffectual resolutions: But a sudden convulsion shook his nerves; disabled his tongue; and, in less than an hour, dissolved his frame.

May the children of this world be warned, by the dying

* Psal. xxxix. 6.

dying words of an unhappy brother, and gather advantage from his misfortune.—Why ſhould they pant, with ſuch impatient ardor, after *white* and *yellow* earth, as if the univerſe did not afford ſufficient for every one to take a little? Why ſhould they *lade* themſelves with thick clay, when they are to "*run* "for an incorruptible crown, and preſs towards the "prize of their high-calling?" Why ſhould they overload the veſſel, in which their everlaſting ALL is embarked; or fill their arms with *ſuperfluities*, when they are to ſwim for their *lives*?—Yet ſo prepoſterous is the conduct of thoſe perſons, who are *all induſtry*, to heap up an abundance of the wealth which periſheth; but are ſcarce ſo much as *faintly deſirous*, of being rich towards GOD.

O! that we may walk thro' all theſe glittering toys, at leaſt with a wiſe indifference, if not with a ſuperior diſdain! Having enough for the conveniencies of life, let us only *accommodate* ourſelves with things below, and lay up our *treaſures* in the regions above.—Whereas, if we indulge an anxious concern, or laviſh an inordinate care, on any tranſitory poſſeſſions; we ſhall rivet them to our affections with ſo firm an union, that the utmoſt ſeverity of pain muſt attend the ſeparating ſtroke. By ſuch an eager attachment to what will certainly be raviſhed from us, we ſhall only inſure to ourſelves *accumulated anguiſh*, againſt the agonizing hour: we ſhall plant, aforehand, our dying pillow with thorns *.

SOME, I perceive, arrived at threeſcore years and ten, before they made their exit; nay, ſome few reſigned not their breath, till they had numbered fourſcore revolving

* Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart;
A broken reed at beſt, but oft a ſpear:
On its ſharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires.
Night-Thoughts, N° III.

volving harvests. These, I would hope, "remember-"ed their Creator in the days of their youth;" before their strength became labour and sorrow;—before that low ebb of languishing nature, when *the keepers of the house tremble, and those that look out of the windows are darkened* *; when even the lighting down of *the grasshopper is a burden* on the bending shoulders, *and desire* itself *fails* in the listless, lethargic soul;—before those heavy hours come, and those tiresome moments draw nigh, in which, there is too much reason to say, "*We have no pleasure in them;* "no improvement from them."

If their lamps were unfurnished with oil, how unfit must they be, in such decrepit circumstances, to go to the market, and buy †! For, besides a variety of disorders, arising from the enfeebled constitution, their corruptions must be surprisingly strengthened, by such a long course of irreligion. *Evil habits* must have struck the deepest root; must have twisted themselves with every fibre of the heart; and be as thoroughly ingrained in the disposition, as the foot in the *Æthiopian*'s complexion, or the spots in the leopard's skin. If such a one, under such disadvantages, surmounts all the difficulties which lie in his way to glory, it must be a great and mighty salvation indeed. If such a one escapes destruction, and is saved at the last, it must, without all peradventure, be—*so as by fire* ‡.

This is the season which stands in need of *comfort*, and is very improper to enter upon the *conflict*. The husbandman

* *Eccl.* xii. 3, 5. I need not remind my reader, that, by the former of these figurative expressions, is signified the *enervated* state of the *hands* and *arms*; by the latter, the *dimness* of the eyes, or the total *loss* of *sight*: that, taken in connection with other parts of the chapter, they exhibit, in a series of bold and lively metaphors, a description of the *various infirmities* attendant on old age.

† Matth. xxv. 9. ‡ 1 Cor. iii. 15.

husbandman should now be putting in his sickle, or eating the fruit of his labours; not beginning to break up the ground, or scatter the seed.—Nothing, 'tis true, is impossible with GOD. He said, *Let there be light, and there was light;* instantaneous light, diffused, as quick as thought, through all the dismal dominion of primeval darkness. At his command, a leprosy of the longest continuance, and of the utmost inveteracy, departs in a moment. He can, in the greatness of his strength, quicken the wretch, who has lain dead in trespasses and sins, not four days only, but fourscore years.—Yet trust not, O trust not, a point of such *inexpressible* importance, to so dreadful an *uncertainty*. GOD may suspend his power; may withdraw his help; may swear in his wrath, that such abusers of his long-suffering shall "never enter into his rest."

Ye, therefore, that are *vigorous* in health, and *blooming* in years, improve the precious opportunity. Improve your golden hours to the noblest of all purposes; such as may render you meet for the inheritance of saints in light; and ascertain your title to a state of immortal youth, to a crown of eternal glory *.—— Stand not, all the prime of your day, idle; trifle no longer.

* May I be permitted to recommend, as a treasure of fine sentiments, and a treatise particularly apposite to my subject, DR LUCAS's INQUIRY AFTER HAPPINESS? that part especially, which displays the method, and enumerates the advantages, of *improving life, or living much in a little time*, chap. III. p. 158. of the 6th edit.—An *author*, in whom the gentleman, the scholar, and the Christian, are most happily united. A *performance*, which, in point of solid argument, unaffected piety, and a vein of thought amazingly fertile, has, perhaps, no superior.—Nor can I wish my reader a more refined pleasure, or a more substantial happiness, than that of having the sentiments of this entertaining and pathetic writer, wove into the very texture of his heart. Unless I might be allowed to wish, that the writer himself had interspersed the glorious peculiarities of the *gospel* (on which our happiness absolutely depends) a little more liberally through all his works.

longer with the offers of this immenſe felicity; but make haſte, and delay not the time, to keep GOD's commandments. While you are loitering in a *gay inſenſibility*, death may be bending his bow, and marking you out for ſpeedy victims.—Not long ago, I happened to ſpy a thoughtleſs *jay*. The poor bird was idly buſied in dreſſing his pretty plumes, or hopping careleſly from ſpray to ſpray. A ſportſman, coming by, obſerves the feathered rover. Immediately he lifts the tube, and levels his blow. Swifter than whirlwind flies the leaden death; and, in a moment, lays the ſilly creature breathleſs on the ground.—— Such, *ſuch* may be the fate of the man, who has a fair occaſion of obtaining grace to-day, and wantonly poſtpones the improvement of it till to-morrow. He may be cut off in the midſt of his folly; and ruined *for ever*, while he is dreaming of being *wiſe hereafter*.

SOME, no doubt, came to this their laſt retreat, *full of piety*, and *full of days*, "as a ſhock of corn, ripe "with age, and laden with plenty, cometh in, in his "ſeaſon *."—Theſe were children of light, and *wiſe* in their generation; wiſe with that exalted wiſdom which cometh from above, and with that enduring wiſdom which laſts to eternity.—*Rich* alſo they were, more honourably and permanently rich, than all the votaries of mammon. The wealth of the *one* has made itſelf wings, and is irrecoverably gone; while the wretched acquirers are tranſmitted to that place of penury and pain, where not ſo much as one drop of water is allowed to cool their ſcorched tongues. The ſtores of the *other* ſtill abide with them; will never depart from them; but make them glad, for ever and ever, in the city of their GOD. Their treaſures were ſuch, as no created power could *take away;* ſuch as none but infinite beneficence can *beſtow;* and (comfortable

* Job v. 26.

fortable to consider!) such as I, and every indigent longing sinner, may *obtain;* treasures of heavenly knowledge, and saving faith; treasures of atoning blood, and imputed righteousness.

Here * lye their bodies in "peaceable habitations, "and quiet resting-places." Here they have thrown off

* Some, I know, are offended at our burying corpses within the church; and exclaim against it, as a very great *impropriety* and *indecency*. But this, I imagine, proceeds from an excessive and mistaken delicacy. If proper care be taken to secure from injury, the *foundations* of the *building;* and to prevent the exhalation of any *noxious effluvia*, from the putrefying flesh; I cannot discover any inconveniencies attending this practice.

The notion, that noisome carcases (as they are called) are very unbecoming a place consecrated to religious purposes, seems to be derived from the *antiquated Jewish* canon; whereby it was declared, that a dead body imparted defilement to the person who touched it, and polluted the spot where it was lodged. On which account, the *Jews* were scrupulously careful to have their sepulchres built at a distance from their houses; and made it a point of conscience, not to suffer burial-places to subsist in the city. But as this was a rite purely *ceremonial*, it seems to be entirely superseded by the *gospel*-dispensation.

I cannot forbear thinking, that, under the Christian œconomy, there is a propriety and usefulness in the custom.—*Usefulness*, because it must render our solemn assemblies more venerable and awful. For, when we walk over the dust of our friends, or kneel upon the ashes of our relations, this awakening circumstance must strike a lively impression of our own mortality. And what consideration can be more effectual, to make us serious and attentive in hearing, earnest and importunate in praying?

As for the *fitness* of the usage, it seems perfectly suitable to the design of those sacred edifices. They are set apart for God; not only to receive his worshippers, but to preserve the furniture for holy ministrations, and what is, in a peculiar manner, appropriated to the Divine Majesty. Are not the bodies of the saints the Almighty's property? Were they not once the objects of his *tender love?* Are they not still the subjects of his

special

off every *burden*, and are escaped from every *snare*. The head aches no more; the eye forgets to weep; the flesh is no longer racked with acute, nor wasted with lingering distempers. Here they receive a final release from pain, and an everlasting discharge from sorrow. Here danger never threatens them with her terrifying alarms; but *tranquillity* softens their couch, and *safety* guards their repose.—Rest then, ye precious relics, within this hospitable gloom. Rest in gentle slumbers,

special care? Has he not given commandment concerning the bones of his elect; and charged the ocean, and enjoined the grave, to keep them until *that day?* When rocks bright with gems, or mountains rich with mines, are abandoned to the devouring flames; will not *these* be rescued from the fiery ruin? Will not *these* be translated into JEHOVAH's kingdom, and, conjointly with the soul, made "his jewels;" made his peculiar "treasure;" made to shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever?

Is not CHRIST *the LORD of our bodies?* Are they not bought with a price? bought, not with corruptible things, silver and gold, but with his divinely precious blood. And if the blessed JESUS obtained the redemption of our bodies, at so infinitely dear a rate; can it enter into our hearts to conceive, that he should dislike to have them reposed under his own habitation?—Once more; Are not the bodies of the faithful, *temples of the Holy Ghost?* and is there not, upon this supposition, an apparent *propriety*, rather than the least *indecorum*, in remitting these temples of flesh to the temples made with hands? They are vessels of honour; instruments of righteousness; and, even when broken by death, like the fragments of a golden bowl, are valuable; are worthy to be laid up in the safest, most honourable repositories.

Upon the whole, since the LORD JESUS has purchased them at the expence of his blood, and the blessed Spirit has honoured them with his indwelling presence; since they are right dear in the sight of the adorable Trinity, and undoubted heirs of a glorious immortality; why should it be thought a thing improper, to admit them to a transient rest in their heavenly Father's house? Why may they not lye down and sleep in the *outer courts*, since they are soon to be introduced into the *inmost mansions* of everlasting honour and joy?

ſlumbers, till the laſt trumpet ſhall give the welcome ſignal, and ſound aloud, through all your ſilent manſions, "Ariſe; ſhine; for your light is come, and the "glory of the Lord is riſen upon you *."

To theſe, how *calm* was the *evening* of life! In what a ſmiling ſerenity did their ſun go down! When their fleſh and their heart failed, how reviving was the remembrance of an all-ſufficient Redeemer, once dying for *their* ſins, now riſen again for *their* juſtification! How chearing the well-grounded hope of pardon for their tranſgreſſions, and peace with GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD! How did this *aſſuage* the agonies, and *ſweeten* the bitterneſs of death?—Where now is wealth, with all her golden mountains?—Where is honour, with her proud trophies of renown?—Where are all the vain pomps of a deluded world? Can they inſpire *ſuch* comfort, can they adminiſter *any* ſupport, in this laſt extremity? Can *they* compoſe the affrighted thoughts, or buoy up the departing ſoul, amidſt all the pangs of diſſolution?—The followers of the Lamb ſeem pleaſed and triumphant, even at their laſt gaſp. "GOD's everlaſting arms are "underneath †" their fainting heads. His Spirit whiſpers peace and conſolation to their conſciences. In the ſtrength of theſe heavenly ſuccours, they quit the field, not *captives*, but *conquerors*; with "hopes full of immortality."

And now they are gone.—The ſtruggles of reluctant nature are over. The body ſleeps in death: the ſoul launches into the inviſible ſtate.—But who can imagine the delightful ſurpriſe, when they find themſelves ſurrounded by *guardian angels*, inſtead of *weeping friends*? How ſecurely do they wing their way, and paſs through unknown worlds, under the conduct of thoſe celeſtial guides!—The vale of tears is quite loſt. Farewell, for ever, the realms of wo, and range of malignant beings! They arrive on the *frontiers* of inexpreſſible *felicity*.

* Iſ. lx. 1. † Deut. xxxiii. 27.

felicity. They "are come to the city of the living "GOD:" while a voice, sweeter than music in her softest strains, sweet as the harmony of hymning seraphim, congratulates their arrival, and bespeaks their admission: *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors;* that the heirs of glory may enter in.

Here, then, let us leave the spirits and souls of the righteous, escaped from an entangling *wilderness*, and received into a *paradise* of delights! escaped from the territories of disquietude, and settled in regions of unmolested security! Here they sit down with *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, in the kingdom of their Father. Here they mingle with an innumerable company of angels, and rejoice around the throne of the Lamb; rejoice in the *fruition* of *present* felicity, and in the *assured expectation* of an inconceivable addition to their bliss; when *GOD shall call the heavens from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people* *.

Fools accounted their life madness, and their end to be without honour; but they are numbered among the children of GOD, and their lot, their distinguished and eternal lot, *is among the saints* †! However, therefore, an undiscerning world may *despise*, and a profane world *vilify* the truly religious; be this the supreme, the invariable desire of my heart! "Let me live the life, and die "the

* *Seneca*'s reflections upon the state of holy souls, delivered from the burden of the flesh, are sparkling and fine; yet very *indistinct* and *empty*, compared with the particulars mentioned above, and with many others that might be collected from scripture. *In hoc tam procelloso, et in omnes tempestates exposito navigantibus mari, nullus portus, nisi mortis est. Ne itaque invideris fratri tuo; quiescit. Tandem liber, tandem tutus, tandem æternus est. Fruitur nunc aperto et libero cœlo; ex humili & depresso, in eum emicuit locum, qui solutas vinculis animas beato recipit sinu; et nunc omnia rerum naturæ bona cum summa voluptate percipit.* SEN. ad Polyb.

† Wisdom v. 4, 5.

" the death, of the righteous. O! let my latter end,
" and future ſtate, be like theirs!"

WHAT figure is that which ſtrikes my eye from an eminent part of the wall? It is not only placed in a more *elevated ſituation* than the reſt, but carries a more ſplendid and *ſumptuous air* than ordinary. Swords and ſpears, murdering engines, and inſtruments of ſlaughter, adorn the ſtone with a formidable magnificence.—It proves to be the monument of a noble warrior.

Is ſuch reſpect, thought I, paid to the memory of this brave ſoldier, for ſacrificing his life to the *public good?*—Then, what honours, what immortal honours, are due to the great Captain of our ſalvation? who, though Lord of the angelic legions, and ſupreme Commander of all the heavenly hoſts, willingly offered himſelf a *bleeding* propitiation for *ſinners!*

The one died, being a *mortal;* and only yielded up a life, which was long before forfeited to divine juſtice; which muſt ſoon have been ſurrendered as a debt to nature, if it had not fallen as a prey to war.—But CHRIST took fleſh, and gave up the ghoſt, tho' he was the great I AM; the Fountain of exiſtence; who calls happineſs and immortality all his own. He, who thought it no robbery to be *equal with God;* he, whoſe outgoings were *from everlaſting;* even he was made in the likeneſs of man, and cut off out of the land of the living. Wonder, O heavens! be aſtoniſhed, O earth! HE died the death, of whom it is witneſſed, that he is "the true GOD, and eternal life *."

The one *expoſed* himſelf to peril, in the ſervice of his *ſovereign* and his *country;* which, though it was glorious to do, yet would have been ignominious, in ſuch circumſtances, to have declined.—But CHRIST took the field, tho' he was the *bleſſed* and *only potentate;*

* 1 John v. 20.

tate; the KING of kings, and LORD of lords. CHRIST took the field, tho' he was *sure* to *drop* in the engagement; and put on the harneſs, tho' he knew beforehand, that it muſt reek with his blood. That Prince of heaven reſigned his royal perſon, not barely to the hazard, but to the inevitable ſtroke; to death, certain in its approach, and armed with all its horrors.—And for *whom?* Not for thoſe who were in any degree deſerving; but for his own *diſobedient creatures;* for the pardon of condemned malefactors; for a band of rebels, a race of traitors, the moſt obnoxious and inexcuſable of all criminals; whom he might have left to periſh in their iniquities, without the leaſt impeachment of his goodneſs, and to the diſplay of his avenging juſtice.

The one, it is probable, died *expeditiouſly;* was ſuddenly wounded, and ſoon ſlain. A bullet lodged in his heart, a ſword ſheathed in his breaſt, or a battle-axe cleaving the brain, might put a ſpeedy end to his miſery, diſpatch him "as in a moment."—Whereas the divine Redeemer expired in tedious and protracted torments. His pangs were as *lingering*, as they were *exquiſite*. Even in the prelude to his laſt ſuffering, what a load of ſorrows overwhelmed his ſacred humanity? till the intollerable preſſure wrung blood, inſtead of ſweat, from every pore; till the crimſon flood ſtained all his raiment, and tinged the very ſtones.—But when the laſt ſcene of the tragedy commenced, when the executioner's hammer had nailed him to the croſs; O! how many *diſmal hours* did that illuſtrious ſufferer hang; a ſpectacle of wo to GOD, to angels, and to men! His temples mangled with the thorny crown! his hands and feet cleft with the rugged irons! his whole body covered with wounds and bruiſes! and his ſoul, his very ſoul, pierced with pangs of unutterable diſtreſs!

So long he hung, that nature, through all her dominions, was thrown into ſympathizing commotions. The *earth* could no longer ſuſtain ſuch barbarous indignities,

dignities, without trembling; nor the *ſun* behold them, without horror. Nay, ſo long did he hang in this extremity of agony and torture, that the alarm reached even the remote *regions* of the *dead*.—Never, O my ſoul, never forget the amazing truth. The Lamb of GOD was ſeized; was bound; was ſlaughtered with the utmoſt inhumanity; and endured death in all its bitterneſs, for thee. His murderers, ſtudiouſly cruel, ſo guided the fatal cup, that he taſted *every drop* of its gall, before he drank it off to the *very dregs*.

Once again; The warrior died like a *hero*, and fell gallantly in the field of battle.—But died not CHRIST *as a fool dieth* *? Not on the bed of honour, with ſcars of glory in his breaſt; but, like ſome execrable miſcreant, on a *gibbet*; with laſhes of the vile ſcourge on his back. Yes, the bleſſed JESUS bowed his expiring head on the accurſed tree; ſuſpended between heaven and earth, as an outcaſt from both, and unworthy of either.

What ſuitable returns of inflamed and adoring devotion can we make to the Holy One of GOD; thus dying, that we might live? dying in ignominy and anguiſh, that we might live for ever in the heights of joy, and ſit for ever on thrones of glory.—Alas! it is not in *us*, impotent, inſenſible mortals, to be duly thankful. *He* only, who confers ſuch inconceivably rich favours, can enkindle a proper warmth of grateful affection. Then build thyſelf a *monument*, moſt gracious IMMANUEL, build thyſelf an everlaſting monument of *gratitude* in our ſouls. Inſcribe the memory of thy matchleſs beneficence, not with ink and pen but with that precious *blood*, which guſhed from thy wounded veins. Engrave it, not with the hammer and chizel, but with that ſharpened *ſpear*, which pierced thy ſacred ſide. Let it ſtand conſpicuous and indelible,

* *Sam.* iii. 33. Of this indignity our LORD complains; *Are ye come out as againſt a thief?* Matth. xxvi. 55.

indelible, not on outward tables of ſtone, but on the very inmoſt *tables* of our *hearts*.

One thing more let me obſerve, before I bid adieu to this intombed warrior, and his garniſhed ſepulchre. How mean are theſe oſtentatious methods of *bribing* the *vote* of fame, and purchaſing a little poſthumous renown! What a poor ſubſtitute for a ſet of memorable actions, is poliſhed alabaſter, or the mimicry of ſculptured marble! The real excellency of this bleeding patriot, is written on the minds of his countrymen. It would be remembered with applauſe, ſo long as the nation ſubſiſts, without this artificial expedient to perpetuate it‡.—And ſuch, ſuch is the monument I would wiſh for myſelf. Let me leave a memorial in the breaſts of my fellow-creatures. Let ſurviving friends bear witneſs, that I have not lived to myſelf alone, nor been altogether unſerviceable in my generation. O! let an uninterrupted ſeries of beneficent offices be the *inſcription*; and the beſt intereſts of my acquaintance, the *plate* that exhibits it.

Let

‡ Sir *Bevil Granville*, ſlain in the civil wars, at an engagement with the rebels.—It may poſſibly be ſome entertainment to the reader, if I ſubjoin Sir *Bevile's* character, as it is drawn by that celebrated pen, which wrote the hiſtory of thoſe calamitous times.—"That which would have clouded any victory," ſays the noble hiſtorian, "and made the loſs of "others leſs ſpoken of, was the death of Sir *Bevil Granville*. "He was indeed an excellent perſon, whoſe activity, intereſt, "and reputation, were the foundation of what had been "done in *Cornwall*: his temper and affections ſo public, that "no accident which happened, could make any impreſſion "upon him; and his example kept others from taking any "thing ill, or at leaſt ſeeming to do ſo. In a word, a brighter "courage, and a gentler diſpoſition, were never married to-"gether, to make the moſt chearful and innocent converſa-"tion."

Clar. *Hiſt. Reb.* vol. II.

Let the *poor*, as they pass by my grave, point at the little spot, and thankfully acknowledge,—"There lyes "the man, whose unwearied kindness was the constant "relief of my various distresses; who tenderly visited "my languishing bed, and readily supplied my indi- "gent circumstances. How often were his counsels a "guide to my perplexed thoughts, and a cordial to "my dejected spirit! 'Tis owing to GOD's blessing "on his seasonable charities, and prudent consolations, "that I now live, and live in comfort."—Let a person, once *ignorant* and *ungodly*, lift up his eyes to heaven, and say within himself, as he walks over my bones, "Here are the last remains of that sincere friend, who "*watched for my soul*. I can never forget, with what "heedless gaiety I was posting on in the paths of "perdition; and I tremble to think, into what irre- "trievable ruin I might quickly have been plunged, "had not his faithful admonitions arrested me in the "wild career. I was unacquainted with the gospel of "peace, and had no concern for its unsearchable trea- "sures; but now enlightened by his *instructive con- "versation*, I see the all-sufficiency of my Saviour; "and, animated by his *repeated exhortations*, I count "all things but loss, that I may win CHRIST. Me- "thinks his discourses, seasoned with religion, and "set home by the divine Spirit, still tingle in my ears; "are still warm on my heart; and, I trust, will be more "and more operative, till we meet each other in the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

The only *infallible* way of immortalizing our characters, a way equally open to the meanest and most exalted fortune, is, "to make our calling and election "sure;" to gain some sweet evidence, that our *names are written in heaven*. Then, however they may be disregarded or forgotten among men, they will not fail to be had in everlasting remembrance, before the LORD.—This is, of all distinctions, far the noblest. *Ambition*, be this thy object, and every page of scripture

ture will ſanctify thy paſſion; even grace itſelf will fan thy flame.—As to earthly memorials, yet a little while, and they are all obliterated. The tongue of thoſe, whoſe happineſs we have zealouſly promoted, muſt ſoon be ſilent in the coffin. Characters cut with a pen of iron, and committed to the ſolid rock, will ere long ceaſe to be legible *. But as many as are enrolled "in the Lamb's book of life," he himſelf declares, ſhall never be blotted out from thoſe annals of eternity †. When a flight of years has mouldered the triumphal column into duſt; when the brazen ſtatue periſhes, under the corroding hand of time; *thoſe honours* ſtill continue; ſtill are blooming and incorruptible, in the world of glory.

Make the extended ſkies your tomb;
Let ſtars record your worth:
Yet know, vain mortals, all muſt die,
As nature's *ficklieſt birth.*

Would bounteous heav'n indulge my pray'r,
I frame a nobler choice;
Nor, living, wiſh the pompous pile;
Nor, dead, regret the loſs.

In thy fair *book of life* divine,
My GOD, inſcribe my name:
There let it fill ſome humble place,
Beneath the ſlaughter'd Lamb.

Thy ſaints, while ages roll away,
In endleſs fame ſurvive;
Their glories, o'er the wrongs of time
Greatly triumphant, live.

YONDER entrance leads, I ſuppoſe, to the *vault*. Let me turn aſide, and take one view of the habitation,

*—*Data ſunt ipſis quoque fata ſepulchris.* Juv.

† Rev. iii. 5.

tion, and its tenants.—The ſullen *door* grates upon its hinges; not uſed to receive many viſitants, it admits me with reluctance and murmurs.—What meaneth this *ſudden trepidation*, while I deſcend the ſteps, and am viſiting the pale nations of the dead?—Be compoſed, my ſpirits; there is nothing to fear in theſe quiet chambers. "Here, even the wicked ceaſe from trou-" bling."

Good heavens! what a ſolemn ſcene!—how diſmal the *gloom!* Here is perpetual darkneſs, and night even at noon-day.—How doleful the *ſolitude!* Not one trace of chearful ſociety; but ſorrow and terror ſeem to have made this their dreaded abode.—Hark! how the hollow dome reſounds at every tread. The *echoes*, that long have ſlept, are awakened, and lament, and ſigh, along the walls.

A beam or two finds its way thro' the grates; and reflects a feeble glimmer, from the nails of the *coffins*. So many of thoſe ſad ſpectacles, half concealed in ſhades, half ſeen dimly by the baleful twilight, add a deeper horror to theſe gloomy manſions.—I pore upon the inſcriptions, and am juſt able to pick out, that theſe are the remains of the rich and renowned. No vulgar dead are depoſited here. The *Moſt Illuſtrious*, and *Right Honourable*, have claimed this for their laſt retreat. And, indeed, they retain ſomewhat of a ſhadowy pre-eminence. They lye, ranged in mournful order, and in a ſort of ſilent pomp, under the arches of an ample ſepulchre; while meaner corpſes, without much ceremony, "go down to the ſtones of the pit."

My apprehenſions recover from their ſurpriſe, I find, here are no phantoms, but ſuch as fear raiſes.—However, it ſtill amazes me, to obſerve the wonders of this nether world. Thoſe who received vaſt revenues, and called whole lordſhips their own, are here reduced to half a dozen feet of earth, or confined in a few *ſheets* of *lead*. Rooms of ſtate, and ſumptuous furniture, are reſigned, for no other ornament than the *ſhroud*, for

no

no other apartment than the darkſome *niche*.—Where is the ſtar that blazed upon the breaſt, or coronet that glittered round the temples? The only remains of departed dignity are, the weather-beaten hatchment, and the tattered eſcutcheon. I ſee no ſplendid retinue ſurrounding this ſolitary dwelling. The lordly equipage hovers no longer about the lifeleſs maſter. He has no other attendant, than a duſty *ſtatue;* which, while the regardleſs world is as gay as ever, the ſculptor's hand has taught to weep.

Thoſe who gloried in high-born anceſtors, and *noble pedigree*, here drop their lofty pretenſions. They acknowledge kindred with creeping things, and *quarter arms* with the meaneſt reptiles. *They ſay to corruption, Thou art my father; and to the worm, Thou art my mother and my ſiſter.*—Or, ſhould they ſtill aſſume the ſtyle of diſtinction, ah! how impotent were the claim! how apparent the oſtentation! It is ſaid by their monument? HERE LYES THE GREAT. How eaſily is it replied by the ſpectator,

——————False marble! Where?
Nothing but poor and ſordid duſt lyes here.

Mortifying truth! Sufficient, one would think, to wean the moſt ſanguine appetite from this tranſitory ſtate of things; from its ſickly ſatisfactions, its fading glories, its vaniſhing treaſures.

For now, ye *lying vanities* of life!
Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train!
Where are ye now? and what is your amount?

What is all the world to theſe poor breathleſs beings?—What are their *pleaſures?* A bubble broke.—What their *honours?* A dream that is forgotten.—What the ſum-total of their *enjoyments* below? Once, perhaps, it appeared to inexperienced and fond deſire, ſomething conſiderable. But, now death has meaſured it with his line, and weighed it in his ſcale, what is the upſhot?

ſhot? Alas! it is ſhorter than a ſpan; lighter than the dancing ſpark; and driven away like the diſſolving ſmoke.

Indulge, my ſoul, a ſerious pauſe. Recollect all the *gay things*, that were wont to dazzle the eyes, and inveigle thy affections. Here examine thoſe baits of ſenſe. Here form an eſtimate of their *real value*. Suppoſe thyſelf firſt among the favourites of fortune, who revel in the lap of pleaſure, who ſhine in the robes of honour, and ſwim in tides of inexhauſted riches. Yet how ſoon would the paſſing-bell proclaim thy exit! And, when once that iron call has ſummoned thee to thy future reckoning, where would all theſe gratifications be? At that period, how will all the pageantry of the moſt affluent, ſplendid, or luxurious circumſtances, vaniſh into empty air!—And is *this* a happineſs ſo paſſionately to be coveted?

I thank you, ye relics of ſounding titles, and magnificent names. Ye have taught me more of the littleneſs of the world, than all the volumes of my library. Your nobility arrayed in a winding-ſheet, your grandeur mouldering in an urn, are the moſt indiſputable proofs of the *nothingneſs* of created things. Never, ſurely, did Providence write this important point in ſuch legible characters, as in the aſhes of *My Lord*, or on the corpſe of *His Grace* *.—Let others, if they pleaſe, pay their obſequious court to your wealthy ſons; and ignobly fawn, or anxiouſly ſue, for preferments; my thoughts ſhall often reſort, in penſive contemplation, to the ſupulchres of their ſires; and learn, from their ſleeping duſt,—to *moderate* my expectations from mortals,—to ſtand *diſengaged* from every undue attachment to the little intereſts of time;—to get above the deluſive amuſements of honour, the gaudy tinſels of wealth, and all the empty ſhadows of a periſhing world.

HARK!

*——————*Mors ſola fatetur*
Quantula ſint hominum corpuſcula.— JUV.

HARK! what *found* is that!—In such a situation, every noise alarms.—Solemn and slow, it breaks again upon the silent air.—'Tis the striking of the clock. Designed, one would imagine, to ratify all my serious meditations. Methinks, it says *Amen*, and sets a seal to every improving hint. It tells me, that another portion of my appointed time is elapsed. One calls it, "the knell of my departed hours." 'Tis the watch-word to vigilance and activity. It cries in the ear of reason, "Redeem the time. Catch the "favourable *gales* of *opportunity*: O! catch them, "while they breathe; before they are irrecoverably "lost. The span of life shortens continually. Thy "minutes are all upon the wing, and hastening to be "gone. Thou art a borderer upon eternity, and ma- "king incessant advances to the state thou art con- "templating." May the admonition sink deep into an attentive and obedient mind! May it teach me that *heavenly arithmetic*, of "numbering my days, "and applying my heart unto wisdom!"

I have often walked beneath the impending promontory's craggy cliff; I have sometimes trod the vast spaces of the lonely desert; and penetrated the inmost recesses of the dreary cavern: but never, never beheld nature louring, with so *tremendous* a form; never felt such impressions of *awe*, striking cold on my heart; as under these black-browed arches, amidst these mouldy walls, and surrounded by such rueful objects, where melancholy, deepest melancholy, for ever spreads her raven wings.—Let me now emerge from the damp and dreadful obscurity.—Farewell, ye seats of desolation, and shades of death! Gladly I revisit the realms of day.

HAVING cast a *superficial* view upon these receptacles of the dead, curiosity prompts my inquiry to a more *intimate* survey. Could we draw back the covering of the tomb; could we discern what those are now, who

once

once were mortals,—O! how would it ſurpriſe and grieve us! *Surpriſe* us, to behold the prodigious tranſformation which has taken place on every individual; *grieve* us, to obſerve the diſhonour done to our nature in general, within theſe ſubterraneous lodgments?

Here, the ſweet and winning *aſpect*, that wore perpetually an attractive ſmile, grins horribly a naked, ghaſtly ſkull.—The *eye*, that outſhone the diamond's brilliancy, and glanced its lovely lightning into the moſt guarded heart; alas! where is it? Where ſhall we find the rolling ſparkler! How are all its ſprightly beams eclipſed, totally eclipſed!—The *tongue*, that once commanded all the power of eloquence, in this ſtrange land, "has forgot its cunning." Where are now thoſe ſtrains of harmony, which raviſhed our ears? Where is that flow of perſuaſion, which carried captive our judgments? The great maſter of language and of ſong, is become ſilent as the night that ſurrounds him.—The pampered fleſh, ſo lately clothed in purple and fine linen, how is it covered rudely with clods of clay! There was a time, when the timorouſly nice creature would ſcarce "* adventure to ſet a foot upon the ground, for delicate-"neſs and tenderneſs;" but is now enwrapped in clammy earth, and ſleeps on no ſofter a pillow than the ragged gravel-ſtones.—Here "the *ſtrong men* bow themſelves." The nervous arm is unſtrung; the brawny ſinews are relaxed; the limbs, not long ago the ſeats of vigour and activity, lye down motionleſs; and the bones, which were as bars of iron, are crumbled into duſt.

Here the *man of buſineſs* forgets all his favourite ſchemes, and diſcontinues the purſuit of gain. Here is a total ſtand to the circulation of merchandize, and the hurry of trade. In theſe ſolitary receſſes, as in the building of *Solomon's* temple, is heard no ſound of the hammer and axe. The winding-ſheet and the coffin are the utmoſt bound of all earthly devices. "Hither-"to

* Deut. xxviii. 56.

" to may they go, but no farther."—Here the *ſons* of *pleaſure* take a final farewell of their dear delights. No more is the ſenſualiſt anointed with oil, or crowned with roſe-buds. He chants no more to the melody of the viol, nor revels any longer at the banquet of wine. Inſtead of ſumptuous tables, and delicious treats, the poor voluptuary is himſelf a feaſt for fattened inſects; the reptile riots in his fleſh; " the " worm feeds ſweetly on him *."—Here alſo *beauty* fails; bright beauty drops her luſtre here. O! how her roſes fade, and her lilies languiſh, in this bleak ſoil! How does the grand leveller pour contempt upon the charmer of our hearts! how turn to deformity, what captivated the world before!

COULD the *lover* have a ſight of his once-inchanting fair-one, what a ſtartling aſtoniſhment would ſeize him!—" Is this the object I not long ago ſo paſſionate-" ly admired! I ſaid, ſhe was divinely fair, and " thought her ſomewhat more than mortal. Her " form was ſymmetry itſelf; every elegance breathed " in her air; and all the graces waited on her motions. " —'Twas muſic when ſhe ſpoke: but, when ſhe " ſpoke encouragement, 'twas little leſs than rapture. " How my heart danced to thoſe charming accents! " —And can that which ſome weeks ago was to admi-" ration *lovely*, be now ſo inſufferably *loathſome?*— " Where are thoſe bluſhing cheeks? where the coral " lips? where that ivory neck, on which the curling " jet, in ſuch gloſſy ringlets, flowed? with a thouſand " other beauties of perſon, and ten thouſand delicacies " of action *?—Amazing alteration! deluſory bliſs!— " Fondly I gazed upon the glittering *meteor*. It ſhone " brightly;

* Job xxiv. 20.

† *Quo fugit Venus? heu! quove color? decens*
Quo motus? quid habet illius, illius,
Quæ ſpirabat amores,
Quæ me ſurpuerat mihi? Hor.

" brightly; and I miſtook it for a *ſtar*, for a perma-
" nent and ſubſtantial good. But how is it fallen!
" fallen from an orb, not its own! and all that I can
" trace on earth, is but a *putrid maſs*."

Lye, poor *Florella!* lye deep, as thou doſt, in obſcure darkneſs. Let night, with her impenetrable ſhades, always conceal thee. May no prying eye be witneſs to thy diſgrace: but let thy *ſurviving ſiſters* think upon thy ſtate, when they contemplate thy idol in the glaſs. When the pleaſing image riſes gracefully to view, ſurrounded with a world of charms, and fluſhed with joy at the conſciouſneſs of them all;—then, in thoſe minutes of temptation and dangers, when vanity uſes to ſteal into the thoughts,—then let them remember, what a *veil of horror* is drawn over a face, which was once beautiful and brilliant as theirs. Such a ſeaſonable reflection might regulate the labours of the toilet, and create a more earneſt ſolicitude to poliſh the *jewel*, than to varniſh the *caſket*. It might then become their higheſt ambition, to have the mind decked with divine virtues, and dreſſed after the amiable pattern of their Redeemer's holineſs.

And would this prejudice their perſons, or depretiate their charms?—Quite the reverſe. It would ſpread a ſort of heavenly glory over the fineſt *ſet of features*, and heighten the lovelineſs of every other engaging accompliſhment.—What is yet a more inviting conſideration, theſe flowers would not wither with nature, nor be tarniſhed by time; but would open continually into richer beauties, and *flouriſh* even in the *winter* of age.—But the moſt incomparable recommendation of theſe noble qualities, is, that from their hallowed relics, as from the fragrant aſhes of the *phœnix*, will ere long ariſe an illuſtrious form, bright as the wings of angels, laſting as the light of the new *Jeruſalem*.

For my part, the remembrance of this ſad revolution ſhall make me *aſhamed* to pay my devotion to a

ſhrine

ſhrine of periſhing fleſh, and *afraid* to expect all my happineſs from ſo brittle a joy. It ſhall teach me, not to think too highly of well-proportioned clay, tho' formed in the moſt elegant mould, and animated with the ſweeteſt ſoul. 'Tis heaven's laſt, beſt, and crowning gift,—to be received with *gratitude*, and cheriſhed with *love*, as a moſt valuable bleſſing; not worſhipped with the incenſe of flattery, and ſtrains of fulſome adoration, as a goddeſs.—It will cure, I truſt, the *dotage* of my *eyes;* and incline me always to prefer the ſubſtantial "ornaments of a meek and virtuous ſpirit," before the tranſient decorations of white and red on the ſkin.

HERE I called in my roving meditations from their long excurſion on this tender ſubject. Fancy liſtened a while to the ſoliloquy of a lover. Now judgment reſumes the reins, and guides my thoughts to more near and ſelf-intereſting inquiries.—However, upon a review of the whole ſcene, crouded with *ſpectacles* of *mortality* and *trophies* of *death*, I could not forbear ſmiting my breaſt, and fetching a ſigh, and lamenting over the nobleſt of all viſible beings, laid proſtrate under the feet of "the pale horſe, and his rider *."—I could not forbear repeating that pathetic exclamation, "*O! thou* ‡ *Adam, what haſt thou done?*" What deſolation has thy diſobedience wrought in the earth! —See the malignity, the ruinous malignity of *ſin!* Sin has demoliſhed ſo many ſtately ſtructures of fleſh; ſin has made ſuch havock among the moſt excellent ranks of GOD's lower creation; and ſin (that deadly bane of our nature) would have plunged our better part into the execrable horrors of the nethermoſt hell, had not our merciful Mediator interpoſed, and given himſelf for our ranſom.—Therefore, what grateful acknowledgments does the whole world of *penitent* ſinners owe; what ardent returns of love will a whole heaven of

* Rev. vi. 8. ‡ 2 Eſdr. vii. 41.

of *glorified* believers pay, to ſuch a friend, benefactor, and deliverer!

Muſing upon theſe melancholy objects, a faithful remembrancer ſuggeſts from within,—"Muſt this ſad "change ſucceed in *me* alſo? Am I to draw my laſt "gaſp, to become a breathleſs corpſe, and *be* what I "*deplore* *?" Is there a time approaching, when this "body ſhall be carried out upon the bier, and conſigned to its clay-cold bed? while ſome kind acquaintance, perhaps, may drop one parting tear; "and cry, Alas! my brother!—Is the time approaching?"—Nothing is more certain. A decree, much "ſurer than the law of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, has irrevocably determined the doom.

Should one of theſe ghaſtly figures burſt from his confinement, and ſtart up, in frightful deformity, before me;—ſhould the *haggard ſkeleton* lift a clattering hand, and point it full in my view; ſhould it open the ſtiffened jaws, and, with a hoarſe tremendous murmur, break this profound ſilence;—ſhould it accoſt *me*, as *Samuel*'s apparition addreſſed the trembling king,—"*The* LORD *ſhall deliver* thee *alſo into* "*the hands of death; yet a little while, and* thou *ſhalt* "*be with me* §;—the *ſolemn warning*, delivered in ſo ſtriking

* I paſs, with melancholy ſtate,
By all theſe ſolemn heaps of fate;
And think, as ſoft and ſad I tread
Above the venerable dead,
"Time was, like me, they life poſſeſt;
"And time will be, when I ſhall reſt." PARNEL.

§ 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 19. On this place, the *Dutch* tranſlator of the Meditations has added a note; to correct, very probably, what he ſuppoſes a miſtake. On the ſame ſuppoſition, I preſume, the compilers of our rubric ordered the laſt verſe of *Eccluſ* xlvi. to be omitted, in the daily ſervice of the church. But that the ſentiment, hinted above, is ſtrictly true; that it was שמואל הוא *Samuel himſelf* (not an infernal ſpirit, perſonating the prophet) who appeared to the female necromancer at *Endor*;

ſtriking a manner, muſt ſtrongly impreſs my imagination. A meſſage in thunder would ſcarce ſink deeper.—Yet there is abundantly greater reaſon to be alarmed, by that expreſs declaration of the LORD GOD Almighty, "*Thou ſhalt ſurely die.*"—Well then, ſince ſentence is paſſed; ſince I am a condemned man, and know not when the dead warrant may arrive; let me die to *ſin*, and die to the *world*, before I die beneath the ſtroke of a righteous GOD. Let me employ the little uncertain interval of reſpite from execution, in preparing for a happier ſtate, and a better life, that, when the fatal moment comes, and I am commanded to ſhut my eyes upon all things here below, I may open them again, to ſee my Saviour in the manſions above.

Since this body, which is ſo fearfully and wonderfully made, muſt fall to pieces in the grave; ſince I muſt ſoon reſign all my bodily powers to darkneſs, inactivity, and corruption; let it be my conſtant care to uſe them well, while I poſſeſs them! Let my *hands* be ſtretched forth to relieve the needy; and always be "more ready to give than to receive."—Let my *knees* bend, in deepeſt humiliation, before the throne of grace; while my *eyes* are caſt down to the earth, in penitential confuſion; or devoutly looking up to heaven, for pardoning mercy!—In every friendly interview, let the "law of kindneſs dwell on my *lips*;" or rather, if the ſeriouſneſs of my acquaintance permits, let the goſpel of peace flow from my tongue, O! that I might be enabled, in every public concourſe, to lift up my voice like a trumpet; and pour abroad a more joyful ſound, than its moſt melodious accents, in proclaiming the glad tidings of free ſalvation!—Be ſhut, my *ears*, reſolutely ſhut, againſt the malevolent whiſpers of ſlander,

Endor; appeared, not in compliance with any diabolical incantation, but in purſuance of the divine commiſſion; this, I think, is fully proved in the *Hiſtorical account of the life of* David, vol. I. chap. 23.

ſlander, and the contagious breath of filthy talking. But be ſwift to hear the inſtructions of wiſdom; be all attention when your REDEEMER ſpeaks; imbibe the precious truths; and convey them carefully to the heart.—Carry me, my *feet*, to the temple of the LORD, to the beds of the ſick, and houſes of the poor. —May all my members, devoted entirely to my divine Maſter, be the willing inſtruments of promoting his glory!

Then, ye embalmers, you may ſpare your pains. Theſe works of faith, and labours of love; theſe ſhall be my *ſpices* and *perfumes*. Enwrapped in theſe, I would lay me gently down, and ſleep ſweetly in the bleſſed JESUS; hoping, that GOD "will give com-"mandment concerning my bones;" and one day fetch them up from the duſt, as ſilver from the furnace, purified, "I ſay not ſeven times, but ſeventy "times ſeven."

HERE my contemplation took wing; and in an inſtant, alighted in the garden adjoining to mount *Calvary*. Having viewed the abode of my deceaſed fellow-creatures, methought, I longed to ſee the place where our LORD lay.—And, O! what a marvellous ſpectacle was once exhibited in this memorable ſepulchre! *He*, "who clothes himſelf with light, as with a "garment; and walks upon the wings of the wind *;"

HE

* The ſcriptures, ſpeaking of the ſupreme Being, ſay,—*He walketh upon the waves of the ſea*, to denote his uncontrollable power, *Job* ix. 8.—*He walketh in the circuit of heaven*, to expreſs the immenſity of his preſence, *Job* xxii. 14.—*He walketh upon the wings of the wind*, to ſignify the amazing ſwiftneſs of his operations, *Pſal.* civ. 3.——In which laſt phraſe, there is, I think, an elegance and emphaſis, not taken notice of by our commentators, yet unequalled in any writer. Not, he *flieth*; he *runneth*; but, he *walketh*: and that on the *very wings* of the wind; on the moſt impetuous of elements, rouſed into its utmoſt rage, and ſweeping along with inconceivable

HE was pleaſed to wear the habiliments of *mortality*, and dwelt among the *proſtrate* dead.—Who can repeat the wondrous truth too often? Who can dwell upon the tranſporting theme too long? HE, who ſits enthroned in glory, and diffuſes bliſs among all the heavenly hoſts; HE was once a pale and bloody corpſe, and preſſed this little ſpot.

O death! how great was thy triumph in that hour! Never did thy gloomy realms contain *ſuch* a priſoner before.—*Priſoner*, did I ſay? No; he was more than conqueror. He aroſe, far more mightily than *Samſon*, from a tranſient ſlumber; broke down the gates, and demoliſhed the ſtrong-holds, of thoſe dark dominions.—And this, O mortals, this is your only *conſolation* and *ſecurity*. JESUS has trod the dreadful path, and ſmoothed it for your paſſage.—JESUS, ſleeping in the chambers of the tomb, has brightened the diſmal manſion, and left an inviting odour in thoſe beds of duſt. The dying JESUS (never let the comfortable truth depart from your minds! the dying JESUS) is your ſure *protection*, your unqueſtionable *paſſport*, through the territories of the grave. Believe in him; and they ſhall prove a "highway to *Sion*;" ſhall tranſmit you ſafe to paradiſe. Believe in him; and you ſhall be no loſers, but unſpeakable gainers, by your diſſolution. For hear what the oracle of heaven ſays upon this important point, *Whoſo believeth in me, ſhall*

ceivable rapidity.—A tumult in nature, not to be deſcribed, is the *compoſed* and *ſedate* work of the DEITY. A ſpeed, not to be meaſured, is (with reverence I uſe the expreſſion, and to comport with our low methods of conception) the *ſolemn* and *majeſtic foot-pace* of JEHOVAH.—How *flat* are the following lines, even in the great maſter of lyric ſong,

Ocyor cervis, et agente nimbos
Ocyor euro,

when compared with this inimitable ſtroke of divine poetry!—He *walketh* upon the *wings* of the *wind*.

shall never die *.—What sublime and emphatical language is this! Thus much, at least, it must import: "—The nature of that last change shall be surprisingly "altered for the better. It shall no longer be *inflicted*, "as a punishment; but rather be *vouchsafed*, as a bless- "ing. To such persons, it shall come attended with "such a train of benefits, as will render it a kind of "happy impropriety, to call it dying. Dying! No; "'tis then they *truly* begin to *live*. Their exit is the "end of their frailty, and their entrance upon per- "fection."—Their last groan is the prelude to life "and immortality."

O ye timorous souls, that are terrified at the sound of the passing bell; that turn pale at the sight of an opened grave; and can scarce behold a coffin or a skull, without a shuddering horror; ye that are *in bondage* to the grisly tyrant, and tremble at the shaking of his iron rod; cry mightily to the Father of your spirits, for *faith* in his dear Son. Faith will free you from your slavery †. Faith will embolden you to tread on (this

* John xi. 26.

† Death's terror is the mountain *faith* removes:
'Tis *faith* disarms destruction.—
Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb.

These, and some other quotations, I am proud to borrow from the *Night-thoughts*, especially from *night* the *fourth*. In which, energy of language, sublimity of sentiment, and the most exquisite beauties of poetry, are the *least* perfections to be admired. Almost every line glows with devotion; rises into the most exalted apprehensions of the adorable Redeemer; and is animated with the most lively faith in his all-sufficient mediation. The author of this excellent performance has the peculiar felicity, of ennobling all the strength of style, and every delicacy of imagination, with the grand and distinguishing truths of Christianity. These thoughts give the highest entertainment to the fancy, and impart the noblest improvement to the mind. They not only refine our taste, but prepare us for death, and ripen us for glory. I never take up this admirable piece, but I am ready to cry out.—*Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens*; i. e. "Inspire me with such a "spirit, and life shall be delightful, nor death itself unwelcome."

(this fiercest of) serpents *.—Old *Simeon*, clasping the child JESUS in the arms of his flesh, and the glorious Mediator in the arms of his faith, departs with tranquillity and peace. That bitter persecutor *Saul*, having won CHRIST, being found in CHRIST, longs to be dismissed from cumbrous clay, and kindles into rapture at the prospect of dissolution †. Methinks, I see another of IMMANUEL's followers, trusting in his Saviour, leaning on his Beloved, go down to the silent shades, with composure and alacrity ‡.—In this powerful name, an innumerable company of sinful creatures have set up their banners; and "overcome through "the blood of the Lamb." Authorized by the Captain of thy salvation, *thou* also mayst set thy feet upon the neck of this king of terrors. Furnished with this antidote, *thou* also mayst play around the hole of the asp, and put thy undaunted hand on this cockatrice-den ‖. Thou mayst ⸸ feel the viper fastening to thy mortal part, and *fear* no *evil*: thou shalt one day shake it off by a joyful resurrection, and *suffer* no *harm*.

RESURRECTION! That chearing word eases my mind of an anxious thought, and solves a most momentous question. I was going to ask, "Wherefore do all "these corpses lye here, in this abject condition? Is this "their final state? Has death conquered! and will the "tyrant hold captivity captive? How long wilt thou for-"get them, O LORD? For ever?"—No, saith the voice from heaven; the word of divine revelation; *The righteous* are all "*prisoners of hope* +." There is an hour, (an awful secret that, and known only to all-forseeing wisdom,) an appointed hour there is, when an act of grace will pass the great seal above, and give them an universal discharge, a general delivery from the abodes of

* Luke x. 19. † Phil. i. 23. 2. Tim. iv. 7. 8. ‡ 2 Pet. i. 14. ‖ Is. xi. 8. ⸸ Acts xxviii. 35. + Zech ix. 12.

of corruption.—Then ſhall the LORD JESUS deſcend from heaven, with the ſhout of the archangel, and the trump of GOD. *Deſtruction* itſelf ſhall hear his call, and the obedient *grave* give up her dead. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they ſhake off the ſleep of ten thouſand years; and ſpring forth, like the bounding roe, to "meet their LORD in the "air."

And, O! with what cordial congratulations, what tranſporting endearments, do the ſoul and body, thoſe affectionate companions, re-unite! But with how much greater demonſtrations of kindneſs, are they *both* received by their compaſſionate Redeemer! The Ancient of days, who comes in the clouds of heaven, is their friend, their father, their bridegroom. He comes with irreſiſtible power and infinite glory; but they have nothing to fear from his majeſtic appearance. Thoſe *tremendous ſolemnities*, which ſpread deſolation and aſtoniſhment through the univerſe, ſerve only to inflame their love, and heighten their hopes. The Judge, the awful Judge, amidſt all his magnificence and ſplendor, vouchſafes to confeſs their names; vouchſafes to commemorate their fidelity, before all the inhabitants of the ſkies, and the whole aſſembled world.

Hark! the thunders are huſhed. See! the lightnings ceaſe their rage. The angelic armies ſtand in ſilent ſuſpenſe. The whole race of *Adam* is wrapped in pleaſing or anxious expectation.—And now that adorable Perſon, whoſe favour is better than life, whoſe acceptance is a crown of glory, lifts up the light of his countenance upon the righteous. He ſpeaks; and what raviſhing words proceed from his gracious lips! What ecſtaſies of delight they enkindle in the breaſts of the faithful!—"I accept you, O my people! Ye "are they that believed in my name. Ye are they "that renounced *yourſelves*, and, *are complete in me*. "I ſee no ſpot or blemiſh in you; for ye are waſhed

"in

" in my blood, and clothed with my righteouſneſs. " Renewed by my Spirit, ye have glorified me on " earth, and have been faithful unto death. Come, " then, ye ſervants of holineſs, enter into the joy of " your LORD. Come, ye children of light, ye bleſ- " ſed of my Father, receive the *kingdom* that ſhall ne- " ver be removed; wear the *crown* which fadeth not " away; and enjoy *pleaſures* for evermore!"

" Then it will be one of the ſmalleſt privileges of the righteous, that they ſhall languiſh no more; that ſickneſs will never again ſhew her pale countenance in their dwellings *. *Death itſelf* will be " ſwallowed " up in victory." That fatal javelin, which has drank the blood of monarchs, and finds its way to the hearts of all the ſons of *Adam*, ſhall be utterly broken. That enormous ſithe, which has ſtruck empires from their root, and ſwept ages and generations into oblivion, ſhall lye by in perpetual uſeleſsneſs. *Sin* alſo, which filled thy quiver, thou inſatiate archer!—ſin, which ſtrung thy arm with reſiſtleſs vigour,—which pointed all thy ſhafts with inevitable deſtruction;—ſin, will then be done away. Whatever is *frail* or *depraved*, will be thrown off with our grave-cloaths. All to come is perfect holineſs, and conſummate happineſs; the term of whoſe continuance is eternity.

O ETERNITY! *eternity!* how are our boldeſt, our ſtrongeſt thoughts, loſt and overwhelmed in thee! Who can ſet land-marks to limit thy dimenſions; or find plummets to fathom thy depths? *Arithmeticians* have figures

* *Iſaiah*, ſpeaking of the new *Jeruſalem*, mentions this as one of its immunities, *The inhabitant thereof ſhall no more ſay, I am ſick.* Another clauſe, in its royal charter, runs thus: *God ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying; neither ſhall there be any more pain.* Iſ. xxxiii. 24. Rev. xxi. 4.

figures to compute all the progreſſions of time; *Aſtronomers* have inſtruments to calculate the diſtances of the planets: but what numbers can ſtate, what lines can guage, the lengths and breadths of eternity? "It "is higher than heaven; what canſt thou do? deep- "er than hell; what canſt thou know? the meaſure "thereof is longer than the earth, broader than the "ſea *."

Myſterious, mighty exiſtence! A ſum not to be leſſened by the largeſt *deductions!* An extent not to be contracted by all poſſible *diminutions!* None can truly ſay, after the moſt prodigious waſte of ages, "So "much of eternity is gone." For when millions of centuries are elapſed, it is but juſt commencing; and when millions more have run their ample round, it will be no nearer ending. Yea, when ages, numerous as the bloom of ſpring, increaſed by the herbage of ſummer, both augmented by the leaves of autumn, and all multiplied by the drops of rain, which drown the winter;—when theſe, and ten thouſand times ten thouſand more,—more than can be repreſented by any ſimilitude, or imagined by any conception;—when all theſe are revolved and finiſhed, eternity, vaſt, boundleſs, amazing eternity, will *only* be *beginning!*

What a pleaſing, yet awful thought is this! full of delight, and full of dread. O! may it alarm our *fears*, quicken our *hopes*, and animate all our *endeavours!* Since we are ſoon to launch into this endleſs and inconceivable ſtate, let us give all diligence to ſecure our entrance into bliſs.—*Now* let us give all diligence; becauſe there is no alteration in the ſcenes of futurity. The wheel never turns: all is ſtedfaſt and immoveable beyond the grave. Whether we are then ſeated on the throne, or ſtretched on the rack, a ſeal will be ſet to our condition, by the hand of everlaſting mercy, or inflexible juſtice.—The *ſaints* always rejoice amidſt the

* Job xi. 8. 9.

the ſmiles of heaven; their harps are perpetually tuned; their triumphs admit of no interruption.—The ruin of the *wicked* is irremediable. The fatal ſentence, once paſſed, is never to be repealed. No hope of exchanging their doleful habitations. But all things bear the ſame diſmal aſpect for ever and ever.

THE *wicked*—my mind recoils * at the apprehenſion of their miſery. It has ſtudiouſly waved the fearful ſubject, and ſeems unwilling to purſue it even now. —But 'tis better to reflect upon it for a few minutes, than to endure it to eternal ages. Perhaps, the conſideration of their aggravated miſery may be *profitably terrible;* may teach me more highly to prize the Saviour, who "delivers from going down into the bottomleſs pit; may drive me, like the avenger's ſword, to this only city of refuge for obnoxious ſinners.

The wicked ſeem to lye here, like malefactors, in a deep and ſtrong dungeon; reſerved againſt the day of trial.—"*Their departure* was without peace." Clouds of horror ſat louring upon their cloſing eye-lids, moſt ſadly foreboding the "blackneſs of darkneſs for ever." When the laſt ſickneſs ſeized their frame, and the inevitable change advanced; when they ſaw the fatal arrow fitting to the ſtrings, ſaw the deadly archer aiming at their heart, and felt the envenomed ſhaft faſtened in their vitals;—good GOD! what fearfulneſs came upon them! what horrible dread overwhelmed them! How did they ſtand ſhuddering and aghaſt upon the tremendous precipice! exceſſively afraid to plunge into the abyſs of eternity, yet utterly unable to maintain their ſtanding on the verge of life.

O! what pale reviews, what ſtartling proſpects, conſpire to augment their ſorrows!—They look *backward*, and behold! a moſt melancholy ſcene! Sins unrepented

* —*Animus meminiſſe horret, luctuque refugit.* VIRG.

unrepented of; mercy slighted; and the day of grace ending!—They look *forward*, and nothing presents itself, but the righteous Judge, the dreadful tribunal, and a most solemn reckoning.—They roll *around* their affrighted eyes on attending friends. If accomplices in debauchery, it sharpens their anguish, to consider this farther aggravation of their guilt, that they have not sinned alone, but drawn others into the snare. If religious acquaintance, it strikes a fresh gash into their hearts, to think of never seeing them any more, but only at an unapproachable distance, separated by the unpassable gulf.

At last, perhaps, they begin to *pray*. Finding no other possible way of relief, they are constrained to apply unto the Almighty. With trembling lips, and a faltering tongue, they cry unto that sovereign Being, "who kills and makes alive."—But why have they *deferred*, so long deferred their addresses to GOD? Why have they *despised* all his councils, and stood incorrigible under his incessant reproofs? How often have they been forewarned of these terrors, and most importunately intreated to *seek the LORD while he might be found?*—I wish they may obtain mercy at the eleventh, at the last hour. I wish they may be snatched from the jaws, the opened, the gaping, the almost closing jaws of damnation. But, alas! who can tell, whether affronted Majesty will lend an ear to their complaint? whether the Holy One will work a miracle of grace in behalf of such transgressors? He may, for aught any mortal knows, "laugh at their calamity, "and mock when their fear cometh."

Thus they lye groaning out the poor remains of life; their limbs bathed in sweat; their heart struggling with convulsive throes; pains insupportable throbbing in every pulse; and innumerable darts of agony transfixing their conscience.

In that dread moment, how the frantic soul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement;

Runs to each avenue; and ſhrieks for help;
But ſhrieks in vain! How wiſhfully ſhe looks
On all ſhe's leaving, now no longer hers!
A little longer, yet a little longer,
O! might ſhe ſtay, to waſh away her crimes,
And fit her for her paſſage! Mournful ſight!
Her very eyes weep blood; and every groan
She heaves, is big with horror: but the foe,
Like a ſtaunch murd'rer, ſteady to his purpoſe,
Purſues her cloſe through every lane of life,
Nor miſſes once the track; but preſſes on;
Till, forc'd at laſt to the tremendous verge,
At once ſhe ſinks *.—

If *this* be the *end* of the ungodly, "My ſoul, come "not thou into their ſecret! Unto their aſſembly, "mine honour, be not thou united!"—How awfully accompliſhed is that prediction of inſpired Wiſdom! *Sin*, though ſeemingly ſweet in the commiſſion, yet *at the laſt it biteth like a ſerpent, and ſtingeth like an adder.*—Fly therefore from the tents, O! fly from the ways of ſuch wretched men.

HAPPY diſſolution! were this the period of their woes. But, alas! all theſe tribulations are only "the "*beginning of ſorrows;*" a ſmall drop only from that "cup of trembling," which is mingled for their future portion.—No ſooner has the laſt pang diſlodged their reluctant ſouls, but they are hurried into the preſence of an injured angry GOD. Not under the conducting care of beneficent angels, but expoſed to the inſults of accurſed ſpirits, who lately *tempted* them, now *upbraid* them, and will for ever *torment* them.—Who can imagine their confuſion and diſtreſs, when they ſtand guilty, and inexcuſable, before their incenſed Creator? They are received with frowns. The GOD that made them, has no mercy on them ‡." The Prince of Peace

* See a valuable poem, entitled, *The Grave.* ‡ Iſ. xxvii. 11.

Peace rejects them with abhorrence. He consigns them over to chains of *darkness*, and receptacles of *despair*; against the severer doom, and more public infamy, of the great day.—Then all the vials of wrath will be emptied upon these wretched creatures. The law they have violated, and the gospel they have slighted, the power they have defied, and the goodness they have abused, will all get themselves honour in their exemplary destruction. Then GOD, the GOD to whom vengeance belongeth, will draw the arrow to the very head, and set them as the mark of his inexorable displeasure.

Resurrection will be no privilege to them; but immortality itself their everlasting curse.—Would they not bless the grave, "that land where all things are forgotten;" and wish to lye eternally hid in its deepest gloom? But the dust refuses to *conceal* their persons, or to draw a *veil* over their practices. They also must awake; must arise; must appear at the bar; and meet the Judge; a Judge, before whom "the pil-"lars of heaven tremble, and the earth melts away;" a Judge, once long-suffering, and very compassionate; but now unalterably determined to teach stubborn offenders,--what it is to *provoke* the omnipotent Godhead; what it is to *trample* upon the blood of his Son, and offer *despite* to all the gracious overtures of his Spirit.

O! the perplexity! the distraction! that must seize the impenitent rebels, when they are summoned to the great tribunal!—What will they do in this day of severe visitation? this day of final decision?—Where? how? whence can they find help?—To which of the saints will they turn! whither betake themselves for shelter or for succour?—Alas! 'tis all in vain; 'tis all too late.—Friends and acquaintance know them no more. Men and angels abandon them to their approaching doom. Even the Mediator, the MEDIATOR himself, deserts them in this dreadful hour.—To *fly*, will be impracticable; to *justify* themselves,

ſtill more impoſſible; and now to make any *ſupplications*, utterly unavailable.

Behold! the books are opened; the ſecrets of all hearts are diſcloſed; the hidden things of darkneſs are brought to light. How empty, how ineffectual *now*, are all thoſe refined *artifices*, with which hypocrites impoſed upon their fellow-creatures, and preſerved a character in the ſight of men!—The jealous GOD, who has been about their path, and about their bed, and 'ſpied out all their ways, ſets before them the things that they have done. They cannot anſwer him one in a thouſand, nor ſtand in the awful judgment. *The heavens reveal their iniquities, and the earth riſes up againſt them* *. They are *ſpeechleſs* with guilt, and *ſtigmatized* with infamy, before all the armies of the ſky, and all the nations of the redeemed.—What a favour would they eſteem it, to hide their aſhamed heads in the bottom of the ocean, or even to be buried beneath the ruins of the tottering world!

If the contempt poured upon them be thus inſupportable, how will their hearts endure, when the *ſword* of infinite indignation is unſheathed, and fiercely waved around their defenceleſs heads, or pointed directly at their naked breaſts? How muſt the wretches ſcream with wild amazement, and rend the very heavens with their cries, when the *right-aiming thunderbolts* go abroad? go abroad with a dreadful commiſſion, to drive them from the kingdoms of glory; and plunge them,—not into the ſorrows of a moment, or the tortures of an hour,—but into all the reſtleſs agonies of unquenchable fire, and everlaſting deſpair †.

Miſery of miſeries! too ſhocking for reflection to dwell

* Job xx. 27.

† Regions of ſorrow, doleful ſhades, where peace
And reſt can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all: but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning ſulphur unconſum'd. MILT.

dwell upon. But, if so dismal to *foresee*, and that at a distance, together with some comfortable expectation of escaping it,—O! how bitter, inconceivably bitter, to *bear*, without any intermission, or any mitigation, through hopeless and eternal ages!

Who has any bowels of pity?—Who has any sentiments of compassion? Who has any tender concern for his fellow-creatures? Who?—In GOD's name, and for CHRIST's sake, let him shew it, by warning every man, and beseeching every man, to *seek* the LORD while he may be *found;* to throw down the arms of rebellion, before the act of indemnity expires; submissively to adore the Lamb, while he holds out the golden sceptre.—Here let us act the friendly part to mankind; here let the whole force of our *benevolence* exert itself; in exhorting relations, acquaintance, neighbours, whomsoever we may probably influence, to take the wings of *faith* unfeigned, of *repentance* undelayed, and flee away from this wrath to come.

UPON the whole, what stupendous discoveries are these! Lay them up in a faithful remembrance, O my soul. Recollect them with the most serious attention, when thou lyest down, and when thou risest up. When thou walkest, receive them for thy *companions;* when thou talkest, listen to them as thy *prompters;* and whatever thou dost, consult them as thy *directors*.—Influenced by these considerations, thy views will greaten, thy affections be exalted, and thou thyself raised above the tantalizing power of perishing things. Duly mindful of these, it will be the sum of thy *desires*, and the scope of thy *endeavours*, to gain the approbation of that sovereign Being, who will then fill the throne, and pronounce the decisive sentence. Thou wilt see nothing worth a wish *, in comparison of having

* Great day of dread, decision, and despair!
At thought of thee, each sublunary wish
Lets go its eager grasp, and quits the world. *Night-Thoughts.*

ving his will for thy rule; his glory for thy aim; and his Holy Spirit for thy ever-actuating principle.

WONDER, O man; be loſt in admiration, at thoſe *prodigious events*, which are coming upon the univerſe: events, the greatneſs of which nothing finite can meaſure; ſuch as will cauſe whatever is conſiderable or momentous in the annals of all generations, to ſink into littleneſs and nothing: Events (JESUS prepare us for their approach; defend us, when they take place!) big with the everlaſting fates of all the living, and all the dead.—I muſt ſee the graves cleaving, the ſea teeming, and ſwarms unſuſpected, crouds unnumbered, yea, multitudes of *thronging nations*, riſing from both.—I muſt ſee the world in flames; muſt ſtand at the diſſolution of all terreſtrial things; and be an attendant on the *burial* of *nature*.—I muſt ſee the vaſt expanſe of the ſky, wrapt up like a ſcroll; and the incarnate GOD, iſſuing forth from light inacceſſible, with ten thouſand times ten thouſand angels, to judge both *men* and *devils*.—I muſt ſee the curtain of time drop; ſee all eternity diſcloſed to view; and enter upon a *ſtate* of being, that will never, never, have an end.

And ought I not (let the vaineſt imagination determine; ought I not) to try the ſincerity of my faith, and take heed to my ways? Is there an *inquiry*, is there a *care*, of greater, of equal, of comparable importance? Is not this an infinitely preſſing call, to ſee that my loins are girded about, my lamp trimmed, and myſelf dreſſed for the Bridegroom's appearance? that, waſhed in the fountain opened in my Saviour's ſide, and clad with the marriage-garment wove by his obedience, I may be found in peace, unblameable, and unreprovable.—Otherwiſe, how ſhall I ſtand with boldneſs, when the ſtars of heaven fall from their orbs? How ſhall I come forth *erect* and *courageous*, when the earth itſelf *reels* to and fro like a drunkard *? How ſhall I look

* Iſ. xxiv. 20.

look up with joy, and see my salvation drawing nigh, when the hearts of millions and millions fail for fear?

Now, Madam, lest my meditations set in a cloud, and leave any unpleasing gloom upon your mind, let me once more turn to the *brightning prospects* of the righteous. A view of them, and their delightful expectations, may serve to exhilarate the thoughts which have been musing upon melancholy subjects, and hovering about the edges of infernal darkness. Just as a spacious field, arrayed in *chearful green*, relieves and re-invigorates the eye, which has fatigued itself by poring upon some minute, or gazing upon some glaring object.

The righteous seem to lye by in the bosom of the earth, as a *wary pilot* in some well-sheltered creek, till all the storms, which infest this lower world, are blown over. Here they enjoy safe anchorage; are in no danger of *foundering*, amidst the waves of prevailing iniquity, or of being *shipwrecked* on the rocks of any powerful temptation. But ere-long we shall behold them hoisting their flag of hope; riding before a sweet gale of atoning merit, and redeeming love; till they make, with all the sails of an assured faith, the blessed port of eternal life.

Then may the honoured friend, to whom I am writing, rich in good works, rich in heavenly tempers, but inexpressibly richer in her Saviour's righteousness,—O! may she enter the harbour, like a gallant *stately vessel*, returned successful and victorious from some grand expedition, with acclamations, honour, and joy! While my *little bark*, attendant on the solemnity, and a partaker of the triumph, glides humbly after; and both rest together in the haven,—the wished for, blissful haven, of perfect security, and everlasting repose.

REFLECTIONS

ON A

FLOWER-GARDEN.

I look upon the pleaſure, which we take in a garden, *as one of the moſt innocent delights in human life.* A garden *was the habitation of our firſt parents before the fall. It is naturally apt to fill the mind with calmneſs and tranquillity, and to lay all its turbulent paſſions at reſt. It gives us a great inſight into the contrivance and wiſdom of Providence, and* ſuggeſts innumerable ſubjects for meditation.

Spect. vol. VII. N° 477.

REFLECTIONS

ON A

FLOWER-GARDEN.

In a LETTER to a LADY.

MADAM,

SOME time ago, my meditations took a turn among the *Tombs;* they visited the awful and melancholy mansions of the dead *; and you was pleased to favour them with your attention.—May I now beg the honour of your company, in a more inviting and delightful excursion? in a beautiful *flower-garden;* where I lately walked, and at once regaled the sense, and indulged the fancy.

IT

* "Discourses on the *vanity* of the creature, which repre-
"sent the barrenness of every thing in this world, and its inca-
"pacity of producing any solid or substantial happiness, are use-

IT was early in a *ſummer-morning*, when the air was cool, the earth moiſt, the whole face of the creation freſh and gay. The noiſy world was ſcarce awake. *Buſineſs* had not quite ſhook off his ſound ſleep; and *Riot* had but juſt reclined his giddy head. All was ſerene; all was ſtill; every thing tended to inſpire tranquillity of mind, and invite to ſerious thought.

Only the wakeful *lark* had left her neſt, and was mounting on high, to ſalute the opening day. Elevated in air, ſhe ſeemed to call the laborious huſbandman to his toil, and all her fellow-ſongſters to their notes.—Earlieſt of birds, ſaid I, companion of the dawn, may I always riſe at thy voice! riſe, to offer the matin-ſong, and adore that beneficent Being, "who maketh the outgoings of the morning and evening to rejoice."

How charming to rove abroad, at this ſweet *hour of prime!* to enjoy the calm of nature; to tread the dewy lawns, and taſte the unrifled freſhneſs of the air!

Sweet is the breath of morn, her riſing ſweet,
With charm of earlieſt birds *.

What a pleaſure do the ſons of *ſloth* loſe? Little, ah! little is the ſluggard ſenſible, how delicious an entertainment he foregoes, for the pooreſt of all animal gratifications †.

The

"ful.—Theſe ſpeculations alſo, which ſhew the *bright ſide* of "things, and lay forth thoſe innocent entertainments, which "are to be met with among the ſeveral objects that encom-"paſs us, are no leſs beneficial." *Spect.* vol. v. N°. 393. *Upon the plan of theſe obſervations, the preceding and following reflections are formed.*

* MILT. Par. Loſt, b. iv. lin. 641.

† See! how revelation and reaſon, the ſcriptures and the claſſics, unanimouſly exhort to this moſt beneficial practice. They both invite us to *early riſing*, by the moſt engaging motives, and the moſt alluring repreſentations.

Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in

The greyneſs of the dawn decays gradually. Abundance of ruddy ſtreaks tinge the fleeces of the firmament; till, at length, the *dappled* aſpect of the eaſt is loſt, in one ardent and boundleſs *bluſh*.—Is it the ſurmiſe of imagination, or do the ſkies really redden with ſhame, to ſee ſo many ſupinely ſtretched on their drowſy pillows?—Shall man be loſt in luxurious eaſe? ſhall man waſte theſe precious hours in idle ſlumbers? while the vigorous ſun is up and going on his Maker's errand; while all the feathered choir are hymning their Creator, and paying their homage in harmony?—No. Let *him* heighten the melody of the tuneful tribes, by adding the rational ſtrains of devotion. Let *him* improve the fragrant oblations of nature, by mingling, with the riſing odours, the more refined breath of praiſe.

'Tis natural for man to look upward *; to throw his firſt glance upon the objects that are above him.

Strait towards heav'n my wond'ring eyes I turn'd,
And gaz'd a while the ample SKY †.

Prodigious theatre! where lightnings dart their fire, and thunders utter their voice; where tempeſts ſpend their rage, and worlds unnumbered roll at large!—O the *greatneſs* of that mighty hand, which meteth out this amazing circumference with a ſpan! O the *immenſity* of that wonderful Being, before whom this

in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us ſee if the vine flouriſh, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth. Cant. vii. 11, 12.

Luciferi primo cum ſidere, frigida rura
Carpamus: dum mane novum, dum gramina canent,
Et ros in tenera pecori gratiſſimus herba eſt.
VIRG. *Georg.* III.

* *Os homini ſublime dedit, cœlumque tueri*
Juſſit, et erectos ad ſidera tollere vultus. OVID.

† MILT. Par. Loſt, b. viii. lin. 257.

this unmeasurable extent is no more than a point!—And O (thou pleasing thought!) the unsearchable *riches* of that *mercy*, which is *greater than the heavens* *! is more enlarged and extensive, in its gracious exercise, than these illimitable tracts of air, and sea, and firmament! which pardons crimes of the most enormous size, and the most horrid aggravations; pardons them, in consideration of the Redeemer's atonement, with perfect freeness, and the utmost readiness! more readily, if it were possible, than this *all-surrounding expanse* admits, within its circuit, a ridge of mountains, or even a grain of sand.

Come hither, then, ye *awakened*, trembling sinners. Come †, weary and heavy-laden with a sense of your iniquities. Condemn yourselves. Renounce all reliance on any thing of your own. Let your *trust be in the tender mercy of* God, *for ever and ever*.

IN

* Psal. cviii. 4.

† The lines which follow, are admirably descriptive of the spirit and practice hinted above. In them desire *pants*; prayer *wrestles*; and faith, as it were, *grasps* the prize.—I take leave to transplant them into this place; and I could wish them a better, a more conspicuous situation, than either their *new* or their *native* soil. Their native soil is no other than *the lamentation of a sinner*, written by Mr *Sternhold*. Notwithstanding the unpromising genius of the performance, I think, we may challenge the greatest masters, to produce any thing more spirited and importunate; more full of nature, or more flushed with life.

Mercy, good LORD, mercy I crave;
This is the total sum;
For mercy, LORD, is all my suit;
LORD, let thy mercy come.

The short sentences—Not a single copulative—The frequent repetition of the divine name—The almost incessant reiteration of the blessing, so passionately desired, and inexpressibly needed—this is the genuine language of ardor; these are beauties obvious to every eye; and cannot fail, either to please the *judious* taste, or to edify the *gracious* heart.

IN them hath he ſet a tabernacle for the ſun *.—Behold him coming forth from the chambers of the eaſt. See! the clouds, like floating curtains, are thrown back at his approach. With what *refulgent majeſty* does he walk abroad! How tranſcendently bright is his countenance, ſhedding day, and inexhauſtible light, thro' the univerſe!—Is there a ſcene, though finiſhed by the moſt elaborate and coſtly refinements of art, "comparable to theſe illuſtrious ſolemnities of opening ſunſhine? Before *theſe*, all the ſtudied pageantry of the theatre, the glittering œconomy of an aſſembly, or even the heightened ornaments of a royal palace, hide their diminiſhed heads, and ſhrink into nothing."—I have read of a perſon ſo ſtruck with the ſplendors of this noble luminary, that he imagined himſelf made on purpoſe to contemplate its glories. O! that Chriſtians would adopt his perſuaſion, and transfer it to the *Sun of Righteouſneſs!* Thus applied, it would ceaſe to be a chimerical notion, and become a moſt important truth. For ſure I am, it is the ſupreme happineſs of the eternal ſtate, and therefore may well be the ruling concern of this preſent life, *to know the only true GOD, and Jeſus CHRIST, whom he hath ſent.*—Nor do I ſtand alone in this opinion. The very beſt judge of whatever is valuable in ſcience, or perfective of our nature; a judge, who formed his taſte on the maxims of paradiſe, and received the finiſhings of his education in the third heavens; this judge determines to *know nothing but JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.* He poſſeſſed, in his own perſon, the fineſt, the moſt admired *accompliſhments;* yet pronounces them no better than *dung*, in compariſon of the † ſupereminent excellency of this ſaving knowledge.

Methinks I diſcern a thouſand admirable properties in the ſun. 'Tis, certainly, the beſt material emblem of the Creator. There is more of GOD in its *luſtre, energy,*

* Pſal. xix. 4.

† Το υπερεχον της γνωσεως, Phil. iii. 7.

energy, and *usefulness*, than in any other visible being. To worship it as a deity, was the least inexcusable of all the Heathen idolatries. One scarce can wonder, that fallen reason should mistake so fair a *copy* for the adorable *original*. No comparison, in the whole book of sacred wisdom, pleases me more, than that which resembles the blessed JESUS, to yonder regent of the day *; who now advances on his azure road, to scatter light and dispense gladness thro' the nations.

WHAT were all the realms of the world, but a *dungeon* of *darkness*, without the beams of the sun? All their fine scenes hid from our view, lost in obscurity.—In vain we roll around our eyes in the midnight-gloom. In vain we strive to behold the features of amiable nature. Turn whither we will, no form or comeliness appears. All seems a dreary waste, an undistinguished chaos, till the returning hours have unbarred the gates of light, and let forth the morn.—Then what a prospect opens! The heavens are paved with azure, and strewed with roses. A variety of the liveliest verdures array the plains. The flowers put on a glow of the richest colours. The whole creation stands forth, dressed in all the charms of beauty. The ravished eye looks round, and wonders.

And what had been the condition of our intellectual nature, without the great Redeemer, and his *divine revelation?*—Alas! what absurd and unworthy apprehensions did the *Pagan* sages form of GOD! What idle dreams, what childish conjectures, were their doctrines of a future state—How did the bulk, even of that favoured nation, the *Jews*, weary themselves in very vanity, to obtain peace and reconciliation with their offended JEHOVAH! till JESUS arose upon our benighted minds, and brought life and immortality to light;

* *Unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of Righteousness arise, with healing in his wings.* Mal. iv. 2.

light; till HE aroſe, *to enlighten the* wretched *Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Iſrael.*

Now we no longer cry out, with a reſtleſs impatience, *Where is GOD my maker?* For we are allowed to contemplate the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, *in the face of JESUS CHRIST.*—Now we no longer inquire, with an unſatisfied ſolicitude, "Which is the way to bliſs?" becauſe JESUS has marked the *path*, by his ſhining example; and left us an unerring *clue*, in his holy word.—Now we have no more reaſon to proceed with miſgiving hearts in our journey to eternity, or to aſk anxiouſly, as we go, "Who will roll away the "ſtone, and open the everlaſting doors? Who will "remove the flaming ſword, and give us admiſſion "into the delights of paradiſe?" For it is done, all done, by the Captain of our ſalvation. Sin he has *expiated*, by the unblemiſhed ſacrifice of himſelf. The law he has *fulfilled*, by his perfect obedience. The ſinner he *tranſforms*, by his ſanctifying Spirit.—In a word, he hath both preſented us with a *clear diſcovery* of good things to come, and adminiſtered to us an *abundant entrance* into the final enjoyment of them.

Whenever, therefore, we bleſs GOD for the circling ſeaſons, and revolving day, let us adore, thankfully adore him, for the *more precious* appearance of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, and his glorious goſpel. Without which, we ſhould have been groping, even to this hour, in ſpiritual darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death: without which, we muſt have wandered in a maze of inextricable uncertainties; and have "ſtum-"bled upon the dark mountains" of error, till we fell into the bottomleſs pit of perdition.

WITHOUT that grand *enlivening* principle, what were this earth, but a lifeleſs maſs? a rude lump of *inactive* matter? The trees could never break forth into leaves, nor the plants ſpring up into flowers. We

should no more behold the meadows mantled over with green, nor the valleys standing thick with corn. Or, to speak in the beautiful language of a prophet; * *No longer would the fig-tree blossom, nor fruit be in the vine: the labour of the olive would fail, and the fields could yield no meat: the flocks must be cut off from the fold, and there would be no herd in the stalls.*—The sun darts its beams among all the vegetable tribes, and paints the spring, and enriches the autumn. This pierces to the roots of the vineyard and the orchard; and sets afloat those fermenting juices, which at length burst into floods of wine, or bend the boughs with a mellow load.—Nor are its favours confined to the *upper regions;* but distributed unto the *deepest recesses* of creation. It penetrates the beds of metal, and finds its way to the place of the sapphires. It tinctures the seeds of gold, that are ripening into ore; and throws a brilliancy into the water of the diamond, that is hardening on its rock.—In short, the beneficial agency of this magnificent luminary is inexpressible. It *beautifies*, and *impregnates*, universal nature. "There "is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

JUST in the same manner, were the rational world *dead in trespasses and sins*, without the reviving energy of JESUS CHRIST. He is "the resurrection and "the life;" the overflowing fountain of the one, and the all-powerful cause of the other. The second *Adam*, is *a quickening spirit*, and all his saints live thro' him. He shines upon their affections: and they shoot forth into heavenly graces, and abound in the fruits of righteousness. Faith unfeigned, and love undissembled, those noblest productions of the renewed nature, are the effect of *his* operation on the mind. Not so much as one divine disposition could spread itself, not one Christian habit unfold and flourish, without the kindly influences of *his* grace.

As

* Hab. iii. 17.

As there is no fruitfulneſs, ſo likewiſe no *chearfulneſs* *, without the ſun.—When that auſpicious ſovereign of the day diffuſes the mildneſs of his morning-ſplendor, he creates an univerſal feſtival. Millions of glittering inſects awake into exiſtence, and baſk in his rays. The birds ſtart from their ſlumbers, and pour their delighted ſouls in harmony. The flocks, with bleating accents, hail the welcome bleſſing. The valleys ring with rural muſic; the hills echo back the artleſs ſtrains. All that is vocal, joins in the general choir: all that has breath, exults in the chearing influence.—Whereas, was that radiant orb extinguiſhed, a tremendous gloom would enſue, and horror inſupportable. Nay, let it only be *eclipſed* for a few minutes, and all nature aſſumes an air of *ſadneſs*. The heavens are wrapt in ſables, and put on a kind of mourning. The moſt ſprightly animals hang down their dejected heads. The ſongſters of the grove are ſtruck dumb. Howling beaſts roam abroad for prey, ominous birds come forth and ſcreech; the heart of man fails, or a ſudden pang ſeizes the foreboding mind.—So, when CHRIST hides away his face, when faith loſes ſight of that Conſolation of *Iſrael*, how *gloomy* are the proſpects of the ſoul! Our GOD ſeems to be a conſuming fire, and our ſins cry loudly for vengeance. The thoughts bleed inwardly; the Chriſtian walks heavily. All without is irkſome; all within is diſconſolate.—Lift up then, moſt gracious JESUS, thou *nobler Day-ſpring* from on high! O lift up the light of thy countenance upon thy people! Reveal the fulneſs of thy mediatorial ſufficiency; make clear our title to this great ſalvation; and thereby impart

What nothing earthly gives, or can deſtroy,
The ſoul's calm ſunſhine, and the heart-felt joy †.

* "The ſun, which is as the great ſoul of the univerſe, and "produces all the neceſſaries of life, has a particular influence "in *chearing* the mind of man, and making the heart *glad*." *Spect.* vol. V. N° 387.

† POPE's *Eth. Ep.*

In one instance more let me pursue the similitude. The sun, I observe, pours his lustre all *around*, to every *distance*, and in every *direction*. Profusely liberal of his gifts, he illuminates and chears all the ends of the earth, and the whole compass of the skies. The east reddens with his rising radiance, and the western hills are gilded with his streaming splendors. The chilly regions of the north are cherished by his genial warmth; while the southern tracts glow with his fire. —Thus are the influences of the Sun of Righteousness *diffusive* and *unconfined*. The generations of old felt them; and generations yet unborn will rejoice in them. The merits of his precious death extended to the first, and will be propagated to the last, ages of mankind.—May they, ere long, visit the remotest climates, and darkest corners of the earth! Command thy gospel, blessed Jesus, thy everlasting gospel, to take the wings of the morning, and travel with yonder sun. Let it fly upon strong pinions among every people, nation, and language; that where the heat scorches, and the cold freezes, thou mayst be known, confessed, and adored! that *strangers* to thy name, and *enemies* to thy doctrine, may be enlightened with the knowledge, and won to the love, of thy truth! O! may that best of æras come, that wished-for period advance, when *all the ends of the world shall remember themselves, and be turned unto the LORD; and all the kindreds of the nations worship before him* *.

From the heavens, we retire to the earth. Here the drops of *dew*, like so many liquid crystals †, sparkle upon the eye. How *brilliant* and unsullied is their lustre! How little inferior to the proud stone, which irradiates a monarch's crown! They want nothing but solidity.

* Psal. xxii. 27.

† Now morn, her rosy steps in th' eastern clime
Advancing, sow'd the earth with *orient pearl*. Milt.

ſolidity and permanency, to equal them with the fineſt treaſures of the jeweller's caſket.—Here, it muſt be confeſſed, they are greatly deficient; ſhort-lived ornaments; poſſeſſed of little more than a *momentary radiance*. The ſun that lights them up, will ſoon melt them into air, or exhale them into vapours. Within another hour, we may "look for their place, and they "ſhall be away."—O! may every good reſolution of mine, and of my flock's; may our united breathings after GOD, not be like theſe *tranſient decorations* of the morning, but like the ſubſtantial glory of the growing day! The one ſhines more and more, with augmented ſplendors; while the other, having glittered gaily for a few moments, diſappear and are loſt.

How ſenſibly has this dew *refreſhed* the vegetable kingdoms! The fervent heat of yeſterday's ſun had almoſt parched the face, and exhauſted the ſweets, of nature. But what a ſovereign reſtorative are theſe *cooling diſtillations* of the night! How they gladden and invigorate the languiſhing herbs! Sprinkled with theſe reviving drops, their verdure deepens; their bloom is now flushed; their fragrance, faint or intermitted, becomes potent and copious.—Thus does the ever-bleſſed SPIRIT *revive* the drooping troubled conſcience of a ſinner. When that almighty Comforter ſheds his ſweet influence on the ſoul, diſplays the all-ſufficient ſacrifice of a divine Redeemer, and "witneſſes with our ſpirit," that we are *intereſted* in the Saviour, and, by this means, are *children* of *GOD*; then what a pleaſing change enſues! Former anxieties are remembered no more. Every uneaſy apprehenſion vaniſhes. Soothing hopes, and delightful expectations, ſucceed. The countenance drops its dejected mien; the eyes brighten with a lively chearfulneſs; while the lips expreſs the heart-felt ſatisfaction, in the language of thankſgiving, and the voice of melody.—In this ſenſe, merciful GOD, *be as the dew unto Iſrael!* "Pour upon them the continual dew of thy bleſſing."

And

And O! let not my fleece be dry, while heavenly benediction descends upon all around.

Who can number these pearly drops? They hang on every hedge; they twinkle from every spray; and adorn the whole herbage of the field. Not a blade of grass, not a single leaf, but wears the watery pendants. So *vast* is the *profusion*, that it baffles the arithmetician's art.—Here let the benevolent mind contemplate and admire that emphatical scripture, which, from this elegant similitude, describes the *increase* of the *Messiah*'s kingdom. The royal prophet, speaking of CHRIST, and foretelling the success of his religion, has this remarkable expression *; *The dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning.* (i. e.) As the morning is the mother of dews; produces them, as it were from a prolific womb; and scatters them with the most lavish abundance, over all the surface of the earth: *so shall thy seed be*, O thou everlasting Father! By the preaching

* *Psal.* cx. 3. מרחם משחר לך טל ילדתך The most exact translation of this difficult passage is, I apprehend, as follows; *Præ rore uteri auroræ, tibi est ros juventutis vel prolis tuæ.* The dew of thy birth is larger, more copious, than the dew which proceeds from the womb of the morning.—I cannot acquiesce in the new version; because that disjoins *the womb of the morning*, from *the dew of thy birth.* Whereas, they seem to have a clear affinity, and a close connection. The womb of the morning is, with the utmost pertinency, applied to the conception and production of dews; agreeably to a delicate line, in that great master of just description, and lively painting, Mr *Thomson*:

The meek-ey'd morn appears, mother of dews. Summer.

We meet with a fine expression in the book of *Job*, which may serve to confirm this remark; may illustrate the propriety of the phrase, used in this connection. "Hath the rain a "father, or who hath *begotten the drops of dew?*" It seems, the oriental writers delighted to represent the dew, as a kind of birth, as the offspring of the morning. And if so, surely there could be no image in the whole compass of the universe, better adapted to the Psalmist's purpose, or more strongly significant

ing of thy word, shall such an innumerable race of regenerate children be born unto thee, and prove an ornament and a blessing to all ages. Millions, millions of willing converts, from every nation under heaven, shall croud

nificant of those multitudes of proselytes, which were *born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD;* by the powerful energy of his word and Spirit.—Upon this supposition, the whole verse describes

The willing subjection,
The gracious accomplishments,
And the vast number,
} of Christ's converts.

q. d. *In the day of thy power*, when thy glorious gospel shall be published in the world, and accompanied with marvellous efficacy,—in that memorable period, *thy people* discontinuing the former oblations, commanded under the *Mosaic* law, shall devote *themselves*, as so many living sacrifices, to thy honour. Not constrained by force, but charmed with thy excellency, they shall come in *volunteers* to thy service, and be *free-will offerings* in thy church.—Neither shall they be "empty vines," or bare professors; but shall walk in all the *beauties of holiness*, and bring forth such amiable fruit, as will adorn the doctrine they embrace.—What is still more desirable, they shall be as *numerous*, as they are willing and holy: born to thee in numbers immense and inconceivable; exceeding even the countless myriads of dew-drops, which are begotten by the night, and issue from the womb of the recent morning.

By this interpretation, the text, I think, is cleared of its obscurity; and appears both truly sublime, and perfectly just.

May I be pardoned the *digression*, and acquitted from *presumption*, if, on this occasion, I take leave to animadvert upon what seems harsh and unnatural in the common exposition of the last verse of this psalm? All the commentators (as many, at least, as I have consulted) inform their readers, that to *drink of the brook in the way*, signifies *to undergo sufferings and death;* which, in my opinion, is a construction extremely forced, and hardly supportable; altogether remote from the import of such poetical forms of diction, customary among the eastern nations. In those sultry climes, nothing could be more welcome to the traveller, than a brook streaming near his paths.

croud into thy family, and repleniſh thy church; till they become like the ſtars of the ſky, or the ſands of the ſea for multitude; or even as numberleſs as theſe fine *ſpangles*, which now cover the face of nature.—

Behold

paths. To quench his thirſt, and lave his feet, in the cooling current, was one of the greateſt refreſhments imaginable, and re-animated him to purſue his journey. For which reaſon, among others, brooks are a very favourite image with the inſpired penmen; uſed to denote a ſituation *fertile* and *delightful*, or a ſtate of *pleaſure* and *ſatisfaction*; but never, that I can recollect, to picture out the contrary condition of tribulation and diſtreſs.

The *water-floods*, indeed, in the ſacred writings, often repreſent ſome imminent danger, or grievous affliction. But then they are not— נחים מים —ſtreams ſo *calm*, that they keep within their banks, and glide quietly by the traveller's footſteps; ſo *clear*, that they are fit for the wayfaring man's uſe, and invite his lips to a draught; both which notions are plainly implied in the text.—They are rather— משברי —*boiſterous billows*; burſting over a ſhip, or daſhing themſelves, with dreadful impetuoſity, upon the ſhore: or— שבלת —*ſweeping inundations*; which bear down all before them, and drown the neighbouring country.—Beſides, in theſe inſtances of horror, we never find the word— תשתה —*He ſhall drink*; which conveys a pleaſing idea, unleſs when it relates to a cup, filled with bitter, intoxicating, or empoiſoned liquors; a caſe quite different from that under conſideration;) but either— כוה — which imports *terror* and *aſtoniſhment*; or elſe— שטפ and עיר —which ſignify to *ruſh upon*, to *overwhelm*, and even to *bury* under the waves.

Upon the whole: May not the paſſage more properly allude to the *influences* of the *Holy Ghoſt?* which were communicated, in unmeaſurable degrees, to our great High Prieſt; and were, in fact, the cauſe of his ſurmounting all difficulties.—Theſe are frequently repreſented by *waters*; "Whoſo believeth on me, "out of his belly ſhall flow rivers of *living waters*." The enjoyment of them is deſcribed by *drinking*; "He that *drink-* "*eth* of the water that I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt."—Then, the ſenſe may run in this well-connected and perſpicuous manner. Is it aſked, How ſhall the Redeemer be able to execute the various and important offices foretold in the preceding

Behold then, ye obſtinately wicked, though you are "not gathered, yet will the Saviour be glorious." His deſign ſhall not miſcarry, nor his labour prove abortive, though you render it of none effect with regard to yourſelves. Think not, that IMMANUEL will want believers, or heaven inhabitants, becauſe *you* continue incorrigible. No; the Lamb that was ſlain, will "ſee of the travail of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied," in a never-failing ſeries of faithful people below, and an immenſe choir of glorified ſaints above; who ſhall form his retinue, and ſurround his throne, in ſhining and triumphant armies, ſuch as no man can number.

HERE I was reminded of the various expedients which Providence, unſearchably wiſe, uſes, to *fructify* both the material and intellectual world.—Sometimes you ſhall have *impetuous* and heavy *ſhowers*, burſting from the angry clouds. They laſh the plains, and make the rivers foam. A ſtorm brings them, and a deluge follows them.—At other times, theſe *gentle dews* are formed, in the ſerene evening-air. They ſteal down, by ſlow degrees, and with inſenſible ſtilneſs; ſo ſubtile, that they deceive the niceſt eye; ſo ſilent, that they eſcape the moſt delicate ear; and when fallen, ſo very light, that they neither bruiſe the tendereſt, nor oppreſs the weakeſt flower.—Very *different* operations! yet each concurs in the *ſame* beneficial end, and both impart fertility to the lap of nature.

So,

ding parts of the pſalm! The prophet replies, *He ſhall drink of the brook in the way.* He ſhall not be left barely to his human nature, which muſt unavoidably ſink under the tremendous work of recovering a loſt world; but, thro' the whole courſe of his incarnate ſtate, through the whole adminiſtration of his mediatorial kingdom, ſhall be ſupported with omnipotent ſuccours. He ſhall drink at the brook of almighty power, and travel on in the greatneſs of an uncreated ſtrength.—— *Therefore ſhall he lift up his head.* By this means, ſhall he be equal to the prodigious taſk, and ſuperior to all oppoſition. By this means, ſhall he be thoroughly ſucceſsful in whatever he undertakes, and greatly triumphant over all his enemies.

So, some persons have I known reclaimed from the unfruitful works of darkness, by *violent* and severe means. The Almighty addressed their stubborn hearts, as he addressed the *Israelites* at *Sinai*, with lightning in his eyes, and thunder in his voice. The conscience, smit with a sense of guilt, and apprehensive of eternal vengeance, trembled through all her powers; just as that strong mountain tottered to its centre. Pangs of remorse, and agonies of fear, preceded their new birth. They were reduced to the last extremities, almost overwhelmed with despair, before they found rest in JESUS CHRIST.—Others have been recovered from a vain conversation, by methods more *mild* and attractive. The Father of spirits applied himself to their teachable minds, in "a still and small voice." His grace came down, as the rain into a fleece of wool; or as these softening drops, which now water the earth. The kingdom of GOD took place in their souls, without noise or observation. They passed from death unto life, from a carnal to a regenerate state, by almost imperceptible advances. The transition resembled the growth of corn; was very visible, when effected; though scarce sensible, while accomplishing. —O thou Author and Finisher of our faith, recall us from our wanderings, and reunite us to thyself! Whether thou *alarm* us with thy terrors, or *allure* us with thy smiles; whether thou drive us with the scourge of conviction, or draw us with the cords of love; let us, in any wise, return to thee; for thou art our supreme good; thou art our only happiness.

BEFORE I proceed farther, let me ascend the *terrace*, and take one survey of the neighbouring *country*. What a prospect rushes upon my sight! How vast; how various; how "full and plenteous with all manner of store!" Nature's whole wealth!—What a rich and inexhaustible magazine is here, furnishing subsistence for every creature! Methinks I read, in these

theſe ſpacious volumes, a moſt lively comment upon that noble celebration of the divine beneficence; *He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteouſneſs.*

Theſe are thy glorious works, Parent of good,
Almighty! Thine this univerſal frame,
Thus wondrous fair! Thyſelf how wond'rous then!
MILT.

The *fields* are covered deep, and ſtand thick, with corn. They expand the milky *grain* to the ſun; while the gales, now inclining, now raiſing each flexile ſtem, open all their ranks to the agency of his beams: which will ſoon impart a firm conſiſtence to the grain, and a gloſſy golden hue to the ear; that they may be qualified to fill the barns of the huſbandman with plenty, and his heart with gladneſs.

Yonder lie the *meadows*, ſmoothed into a perfect level; decorated with an embroidery of the gayeſt flowers; and loaded with * ſpontaneous crops of *herbage:* which, converted into hay, will prove a moſt commodious proviſion for the barrenneſs of winter; will ſupply with fodder our ſerviceable animals, when all the verdure of the plain is killed by froſts, or buried in ſnows.—A winding *ſtream* glides along the flowery margin; and receives the image of the bending ſkies, and waters the roots of many a branching willow. 'Tis ſtocked, no doubt, with variety of *fiſh;* which afford a ſolitary diverſion to the angler, and nouriſh for his table a delicious treat. Nor is it the only merit of this liquid element, to maintain the finny nations; it alſo carries *cleanlineſs*, and diſpenſes *fruitfulneſs*, where-ever it rolls the cryſtal current.

The *paſtures*, with their verdant mounds, chequer the proſpect, and prepare a ſtanding repaſt for our cattle. There "our oxen are made ſtrong to labour; "and

* ——*Injuſſa vireſcunt*
Gramina—— VIRG.

" and our sheep bring forth thousands and ten thou-
" sands." There the horse acquires vigour, for the dispatch of our business; and speed, to expedite our journeys. From thence the kine bring home their udders, distended with one of the richest and healthiest liquors in the world.

On several spots, a *grove* of trees, like some grand collonade, erects its towering head. Every one projects a friendly shade for the beasts, and creats a hospitable lodging for the birds. Every one stands ready, to furnish *timber* for a palace; *masts* for a navy; or, with a more condescending courtesy, *fuel* for our hearths.—One of them seems skirted with a wild uncultivated *heath*; which, like well-disposed shades in painting, throws an additional lustre on the more ornamented parts of the landscape. Nor is its usefulness, like that of a foil, relative only, but real. There several valuable creatures are produced, and accommodated without any expence or care of ours. There, likewise, spring abundance of those *herbs*, which assuage the smart of our wounds, and allay the fiery tumults of the fever; which impart floridity to our circulating fluids, add a more vigorous tone to our active solids, and thereby repair the decays of our enfeebled constitutions.

Nearer the houses, we perceive an ample spread of branches not so stately as the oaks, but more amiable for their annual services. A little while ago, I beheld them; and all was one beauteous, boundless waste of *blossoms*. The eye marvelled at the lovely sight, and the heart rejoiced in the prospect of autumnal plenty. But now the blooming maid is resigned, for the useful matron. The flower is fallen, and the *fruit* swells out on every twig. Breathe soft, ye winds! O spare the tender fruitage, ye surly blasts! Let the *pear-tree* suckle her juicy progeny, till they drop into our hands, and dissolve in our mouths. Let the *plum* hang unmolested upon her boughs, till she fatten her delicious flesh, and

cloud

cloud her poliſhed ſkin with blue. And as for the *apples*, that ſtaple-commodity of our *orchards*, let no injurious ſhocks precipitate them immaturely to the ground; till revolving ſuns have tinged them with a ruddy complexion, and concocted them into an exquiſite flavour. Then, what copious hoards, of what burniſhed rinds, and what delightful reliſhes, will repleniſh the ſtore-room! Some, to preſent us with an early entertainment, and refreſh our palates amidſt the ſultry heats. Some, to borrow ripeneſs from the falling ſnows, and carry autumn into the depths of winter. Some, to adorn the ſalver, make a part of the deſſert, and give an agreeable * cloſe to our feaſts. Others, to fill our vats with a foaming flood; which, mellowed by age, may ſparkle in the glaſs, with a livelineſs and delicacy little inferior to the blood of the grape.

I obſerve ſeveral ſmall *incloſures*, which ſeem to be apprehenſive of ſome hoſtile viſit from the north; and, therefore, are defended, on that quarter, by a thick wood, or a lofty wall. At the ſame time, they cultivate an uninterrupted correſpondence with the ſouth, and throw open their whole dimenſions to its friendly warmth. One, in particular, lyes within the reach of a diſtinguiſhing view, and proves to be a *kitchen-garden*. It looks, methinks, like a plain and frugal republic. Whatever may reſemble the pomp of courts, or the enſigns of royalty, is baniſhed from this humble community. None of the productions of the olitory affect finery, but all are habited with the very perfection of decency. Here thoſe celebrated qualities are eminently united, the utmoſt ſimplicity with the exacteſt neatneſs †.—A ſkilful hand has parcelled out the whole ground into narrow beds, and intervening alleys. The ſame diſcreet management has aſſigned to each

* —— *Ab ovo*
Uſque ad mala—— HOR.

† *Simplex munditiis.* HOR.

each verdant family, a peculiar and distinct abode. So that there is no confusion amidst the greatest multiplicity; because every individual knows its proper home, and all the tribes are ranged with perfect regularity.—If it be pleasing to behold their orderly situation, and their modest beauties; how much more delightful, to consider the advantages they yield! What a *fund* of choice *accommodations* is here! what a source of wholesome dainties! and all, for the enjoyment of man. Why does the *parsley*, with her frizzled locks, shag the border; or why the *celery*, with her whitening arms, perforate the mould; but to render his soops savoury? The *asparagus* shoots its tapering stems, to offer him the first-fruits of the season; and the *artichoke* spreads its turgid top, to give him a treat of vegetable marrow. The tendrils of the * *cucumber* creep into the sun; and, though basking in its hottest rays, they secrete for their master, and barrel up for his use, the most cooling juices of the soil. The *beans* stand firm, like files of embattled troops; the *peas* rest upon their props, like so many companies of invalids; while both repleniſh their pods with the fatness of the earth, on purpose to pour it on their owner's table.—Not one species, among all this variety of herbs, is a cumberer of the ground. Not a single plant, but is good for food, or some way salutary. With so beneficent an œconomy,

* *Virgil*, with great conciseness, and equal propriety, describes the *cucumber*—

—*Tortusque per herbam*
Crescceret in ventrem cucumis.— Georg. IV.

Milton has (if we admit Dr *Bentley*'s alteration, which is, I think, in *this* place, unquestionably just) almost translated the *Latin* poet,

——Forth crept
The *swelling* gourd—

Par. Lost, b. VII. l. 329.

œconomy, are the several periods of their miniſtration ſettled, that no portion of the year is left deſtitute of nouriſhing eſculents. What is ſtill more obliging, every portion of the year affords *ſuch* eſculents, as are beſt ſuited to the temperature of the air, and the ſtate of our bodies.—Why then ſhould the *poſſeſſor* of ſo valuable a ſpot envy the condition of Kings * ? ſince he may daily walk amidſt rows of peaceable and obſequious, though mute ſubjects. Every one of which tenders him ſome agreeable preſent, and pays him a willing tribute ; ſuch as is moſt happily adapted, both to ſupply his wants, and to regale his taſte ; to furniſh him, at once, with plenty and with pleaſure.

At a diſtance, one deſcries the mighty *hills*. They heave their huge ridges among the clouds ; and look like the barriers of kingdoms, or the boundaries of nature. Bare and deformed as their ſurface may appear, their bowels are fraught with inward treaſures ; treaſures lodged faſt in the *quarries*, or ſunk deep in the *mines*. From thence, Induſtry may draw her implements, to plough the ſoil, to reap the grain, and procure every neceſſary convenience. From thence, Art may fetch her materials, to rear the dome, to ſwell the organ, and form the nobleſt ornaments of politer life.

On another ſide, the *great deep* terminates the view. *There go the ſhips ; there is that leviathan ;* and there, in that world of waters, an inconceivable number of animals have their habitation.—This is the capacious *ciſtern* of the *univerſe ;* which admits, as into a receptacle, and diſtributes, as from a reſervoir, whatever waters the whole globe. There is not a fountain that guſhes

* Hic *rarum tamen in dumis olus, albaque circum*
Lilia, verbenaſque premens, veſcumque papaver,
Regum æquabat opes animis : *ſeraque revertens*
Nocte domum, dapibus menſas onerabat inemptis.
VIRG. Georg. IV.

es in the unfrequented desert; nor a rivulet that flows in the remotest continent, nor a cloud that swims in the highest regions of the firmament, but is fed by this all-replenishing source.—The ocean is the grand *vehicle* of *trade*, and the uniter of distant nations. To us it is peculiarly kind, not only as it wafts into our ports the harvest of every climate, and renders our island the centre of traffic; but also as it secures us from foreign invasions, by a sort of impregnable entrenchment *.

Methinks, the view of this profuse munificence inspires a *secret delight*, and kindles a *disinterested goodwill*.—While the "little hills clap their hands," and the luxuriant "valleys laugh and sing;" who can forbear catching the general joy? who is not touched with lively sensations of pleasure?—While the everlasting Father is scattering blessings through his whole family, and crowning the year with his goodness; who does not feel his breast overflowing with a diffusive benevolence?—My heart, I must confess, beats high with satisfaction; and breathes out *congratulatory wishes*, upon all the tenants of these rural abodes: "Peace be within your walls, as well as plenteousness around

* *Whose rampart was the sea.* Nahum iii. 8.

I hope, this little excursion into the country, will not be looked upon as a *departure* from my subject; because a rural view, though no essential part of a garden, is yet a desirable appendage, and necessary to *complete* its beauty.—As usefulness is the most valuable property which can attend any production *this* is the circumstance chiefly touched upon in the survey of the landscape. Tho' every piece of this extensive and diversified scene is cast in the most elegant mould, yet nothing is calculated merely for shew and parade. You see nothing formed in the taste of the ostentatious obelisk, or insignificant pomp of the pyramid. No such idle expences were admitted into that consummate plan, which regulated the structure of the universe. All the decorations of nature are no less *advantageous*, than *ornamental*; such as speak the MAKER infinitely beneficent, as well as incomparably magnificent.

"around your dwellings." Live, ye highly favoured; live sensible of your benefits, and thankful to your Benefactor. Look round upon these prodigiously large incomes of the fruitful soil, and call them, (for you have free leave) all your own.—Only let me remind you of one very important truth. Let me suggest, and may you never forget, that you are *obliged* to CHRIST JESUS, for every one of these accommodations, which spring from the teeming earth, and the smiling skies.

1. CHRIST *made* * them, when they were not.—He fetched them up from utter darkness; and gave them both their being, and their beauty. He created the materials, of which they are composed; and moulded them into this endless multiplicity of amiable forms, and

* When I ascribe the work of creation to the SON, I would by no means be supposed to with-hold the same honour from the eternal FATHER, and ever-blessed SPIRIT. The acts of those inconceivably glorious persons are, like their essence, undivided and one. But I chuse to state the point in this manner, because this is the manifest doctrine of the New Testament, is the express belief of our Church, and a most noble peculiarity of the gospel-revelation.—I chuse it also, because I would take every opportunity of inculcating, and celebrating, the *divinity* of the REDEEMER: A truth, which imparts an unutterable dignity to Christianity: a truth which lays an immoveable foundation for all the comfortable hopes of a Christian: a truth, which will render the mystery of our redemption, the wonder and delight of eternity: and with this truth, every one will observe, my assertion is inseparably connected.

If any one questions, whether this be the doctrine of our church; let the *creed*, which we repeat in our most solemn devotions, determine his doubt: "I believe," says that form of sound words, "in one LORD JESUS CHRIST, very GOD "of very GOD, *by whom all things were made.*"—If it be farther inquired, From whence the *Nicene* fathers derived this article of their faith? I answer, From the writings of the beloved disciple, who lay on the Saviour's bosom; and of that great apostle, who had been caught up into the third heaven, *John* i. 3. *Col.* i. 16.

and useful substances. He arrayed the heavens with a vesture of the mildest blue; and clothed the earth in a livery of the gayest green. His pencil streaked, and his breath perfumed, whatever is beautiful or fragrant in the universe. His strength set fast the mountains; his goodness garnished the vales; and the same *touch* which healed the *leper*, wrought the whole visible *system* into this complete perfection.

2. CHRIST *recovered* them, when they were forfeited.—By *Adam*'s sin, we lost our right to the comforts of life, and fruits of the ground. His disobedience was the most impious and horrid *treason* against the KING of kings. Consequently, his whole patrimony became *confiscated*: as well the portion of temporal good things, settled upon the human race during their minority; as that everlasting heritage reserved for their enjoyment, when they should come to full age. But the "seed of the woman," instantly interposing, took off the attainder, and redeemed the alienated inheritance. The first *Adam* being disinherited, the second *Adam* ‖ was *appointed heir of all things*,

‖ *Heb.* i. 2.—In this sense at least, CHRIST is *the Saviour of all men*. The former and latter rain; the precious fruits of the earth; food to eat, and raiment to put on;—all these he purchased, even for his irreclaimable enemies. *They* eat of his bread, who lift up their heel against him.

We learn from hence, in what a peculiar and endearing light the *Christian* is to contemplate the things that are seen. *Heathens* might discover an eternal power, and infinite wisdom, in the structure of the universe; Heathens might acknowledge a most stupendous liberality, in the unreserved grant of the whole fabric, with all its furniture, to the service of man. But the Christian should ever keep in mind his forfeiture of them, and the price paid to redeem them. He should receive the gifts of indulgent Providence, as the *Israelites* received their law, from the hand of a Mediator: or rather, to him they should come, not only issuing from the stores of an unbounded bounty, but swimming (as it were) in that crimson tide, which streamed from IMMANUEL's veins.

things, visible as well as invisible. And we hold our possession of the former, we expect an instatement in the latter, purely by virtue of our alliance to him, and our union with him.

3. CHRIST *upholds* them, which would otherwise tumble into ruin.—*By him*, says the oracle of inspiration, *all things consist* *. His finger rolls the seasons round, and presides over all the celestial revolutions. His finger winds up the wheels, and impels every spring of vegetative nature. In a word, the whole weight of the creation rests upon his mighty arm, and receives the whole harmony of its motion from his unerring eye.—This habitable globe, with all its rich appendages, and fine machinery, could no more continue, than they could create themselves. *Start* they would into instant *confusion*, or *drop* into their primitive *nothing*, did not his power support, and his wisdom regulate them, every moment. In conformity to his will, they subsist stedfast and invariable in their orders; and wait only for his sovereign nod, to "fall away like water that runneth apace."

4. CHRIST † *actuates* them, which would otherwise be lifeless and insignificant.—Pensioners they are, constant pensioners, on his bounty; and borrow their *all* from

* *Col.* i. 17. I beg leave to subjoin St *Chrysostom*'s pertinent and beautiful note upon the passage; by which it will appear, that the sentiment of these sections is not merely a private opinion, but the avowed belief of the primitive church. Τινες-ιν, says the eloquent father, εις αυλον κρεμαται η πανων υποστασις· ν μονον αυλος αυλα εκ τυ μη ονλος εις το ειναι παρηλθεν, αλλα χ αυλος αυλα συνκρατει νυν ωςε αν αποσπασθη τες αυλυ προνοιας, απολυλε χ διεφθαρται.

† *John* v. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*; or, I exert that unremitting and unwearied energy, which is the life of the creation.—Thus the words are paraphrased by a masterly expositor, who has illustrated the life of our blessed LORD, in the most elegant taste of criticism; with the most amiable spirit of devotion; and without any mixture of the malignant leaven, or low singularities, of a party. See the *Family-expositor*, vol. I. sect. 47.

from his fulneſs. *He only has life;* and whatever operates, operates by an emanation from his all-ſufficiency. Does the grape refreſh you with its enlivening juices? It is by a warrant received, and virtue derived, from the Redeemer. Does bread ſtrengthen your heart, and prove the ſtaff of your life? Remember, that it is by the Saviour's appointment, and through the efficacy of his operation. You are charmed with *his* melody, when the "time of the ſinging "of birds is come, and the voice of the nightingale is "heard in your land." You taſte *his* goodneſs in the luſcious fig, the melting peach, and the muſky flavour of the apricot. You ſmell *his* ſweetneſs in the opening honeyſuckle, and every odoriferous ſhrub.

Could theſe creatures ſpeak for themſelves, they would, doubtleſs, diſclaim all ſufficiency of their own, and aſcribe the whole honour to their Maker.—"We "are ſervants," would they ſay, "of HIM, who died "for you. *Ciſterns*, only dry ciſterns in ourſelves, we "*tranſmit* to mortals no more than the uncreated "fountain tranſfuſes into us. Think not, that, from "any ability of our own, we furniſh you with aſſiſt-"ance, or adminiſter to your comfort. 'Tis the di-"vine energy, the divine energy alone, that works "in us, and does you good.—We *ſerve* you, O ye "ſons of men, that you may *love* him, who placed "us in theſe ſtations. O! love the LORD, there-"fore, all ye who are ſupported by our miniſtry; or "elſe we ſhall * groan, with indignation and regret, "at your abuſe of our ſervices.—Uſe us, and wel-"come; for we are yours, if ye are CHRIST's. "Crop our choiceſt beauties; riſle all our treaſures; "accommodate yourſelves with our moſt valuable "qualities; only let us be incentives to your *grati-"tude*, and motives to your *obedience*."

HAVING ſurveyed the ſpacious ſky, and ſent a glance round the inferior creation, 'tis time to deſcend from this

* Rom. viii. 22.

this eminence, and confine my attention to the *beautiful ſpot* below.—Here Nature, always pleaſing, every where lovely, appears with peculiar attractions. Yonder ſhe ſeems dreſſed in her deſhabille; grand, but irregular. Here ſhe calls in her handmaid, Art; and ſhines in all the delicate ornaments, which the niceſt cultivation is able to convey. *Thoſe* are her common apartments, where ſhe lodges her ordinary gueſts; *this* is her cabinet of curioſities, where ſhe entertains her intimate acquaintance.—My eye ſhall often expatiate over thoſe ſcenes of univerſal fertility; my feet ſhall ſometimes bruſh through the thicket, or traverſe the lawn, or ſtroll along the foreſt-glade; but to this delightful retreat ſhall be my chief reſort. Thither will I *make excurſions;* but here will I *dwell.*

If, from my low procedure, I may form an alluſion to the moſt exalted practices, I would obſerve, upon this occaſion, That the celebrated *Eraſmus*, and our judicious *Locke*, having trod the circle of the ſciences, and ranged through the whole extent of *human* literature, at length betook themſelves ſolely to the *Bible*. Leaving the ſages of antiquity, they ſat inceſſantly at the feet of JESUS. Wiſely they withdrew from that immenſe multiplicity of learning, from thoſe endleſs tracts of amuſing erudition, where noxious weeds are mixed with wholeſome herbs; where is generally a much larger growth of prickly ſhrubs, than of fruitful boughs. They ſpent their moſt mature hours in thoſe hallowed gardens, which GOD's own wiſdom planted, which GOD's own Spirit watereth, and in which GOD's own Son is continually walking; where he meeteth thoſe that ſeek him, and revealeth to them the glories of his perſon, and the riches of his goodneſs.

Thus would I finiſh the remainder of my days! Having juſt *taſted* (what they call) the politer ſtudies, I would now devote my whole *application* to the lively oracles. From other purſuits, I might glean, perhaps, a few

a few ſcattered fragments of low, of lean, of unſatiſfactory inſtruction. From this I truſt to reap a harveſt of the ſublimeſt truths, the nobleſt improvements, and the pureſt joys *.—Waft me then, O! waft my mind to *Sion*'s conſecrated bowers. Let my thoughts perpetually rove thro' the awfully-pleaſing walks of inſpiration. Here grow thoſe heaven-born plants, the trees of *life* and *knowledge;* whoſe ambroſial fruits we now may "take and eat, and live for ever." Here flow thoſe precious ſtreams of *grace* and *righteouſneſs*, whoſe living waters "whoſoever drinks, ſhall thirſt "no more." And what can the fables of *Grecian* ſong, or the fineſt pages of *Roman* eloquence,—what can they exhibit, in any degree comparable to theſe matchleſs prerogatives of revelation?—Therefore, tho' I ſhould not diſlike to pay a *viſit* now and then to my Heathen maſters, I would *live* with the prophets and apoſtles. With thoſe I would carry on ſome occaſional correſpondence; but theſe ſhould be my boſom-friends, my inſeparable companions, "my de-"light, and my counſellors."

WHAT *ſweets* are theſe, which ſo agreeably ſalute my noſtrils? They are the breath of the flowers, the incenſe of the garden.—How liberally does the jeſſamine diſpenſe her odoriferous riches? How deliciouſly has the woodbine embalmed this morning-walk? The air is all perfume.—And is not this another moſt engaging argument to forſake the bed of *ſloth?* Who would lye diſſolved in ſenſeleſs ſlumbers, while ſo many breathing ſweets invite him to a feaſt of fragrancy? Eſpecially conſidering, that the advancing day will exhale the volatile dainties. A *fugitive treat* they are, prepared only for the wakeful and induſtrious. Whereas, when the ſluggard lifts his heavy eyes, the flowers will droop; their fine ſcents be diſſipated; and,

* *Quicquid docetur, veritas; quicquid præcipitur, bonitas; quicquid promittitur, felicitas.*

and, instead of this refreshing humidity, the air will become a kind of liquid fire.

With this very *motive*, heightened by a representation of the most charming pieces of morning-scenery, the parent of mankind awakes his lovely consort. There is such a delicacy in the choice, and so much life in the description, of these rural images, that I cannot excuse myself, without repeating the whole passage.—Whisper it, some friendly *genius*, in the ear of every one, who is now sunk in sleep, and lost to all these refined gratifications!

Awake: the morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls you: ye lose the prime, to mark how spring
The tended plants, how blows the citron-grove;
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed;
How Nature paints her colours; how the bee
Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid sweets *.

How delightful is this fragrance! It is distributed in the nicest *proportion;* neither so strong, as to oppress the organs; nor so faint, as to elude them. We are soon cloyed at a sumptuous banquet; but this pleasure never loses its *poignancy*, never palls the appetite.—Here luxury itself is innocent; or rather, in this case, indulgence is incapable of excess.—This balmy entertainment, not only regales the *sense*, but † chears the very *soul;* and, instead of clogging, elates its powers.—It puts me in mind of that ever-memorable sacrifice, which was once made in behalf of offending mortals. I mean the *sacrifice of the blessed* JESUS, when he offered up himself to GOD, "for a sweet-smelling-savour." Such the Holy Spirit styles that wonderful oblation; as if no image, in the whole sensible creation, was so proper to give us an idea of the *ineffable satisfaction*, which the Father of mercies conceived from

* MILT. Par. Lost, b. v. l. 20.

† *Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart.* PROV. xxvii. 9.

from that unparalleled atonement, as the *pleasing sensations*, which such rich perfumes are capable of raising. "Thousands of rams, and ten thousands of "rivers of oil," from an apostate world; the most submissive acknowledgments, added to the most costly offerings, from men of defiled hands, and unclean lips; what could they have effected? A prophet represents the "high and lofty One, that inhabiteth "eternity," turning himself away from such filthy rags; turning himself away, with a disdainful abhorrence *, as from the noisome steams of a dunghill.—But in CHRIST'S immaculate holiness, in CHRIST'S consummate obedience, in CHRIST'S most precious blood-shedding, with what unimaginable complacency does justice rest satisfied, and vengeance acquiesce!—All thy *works*, O thou Surety for ruined sinners! all thy *sufferings*, O thou slaughtered Lamb of GOD! as well as all thy *garments*, O thou Bridegroom of thy church! *smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia* †! They are infinitely more grateful to the eternal Godhead, than the choicest exhalations of the garden, than all the odours of the spicy east, can be to the human nostrils.

As the altar of old sanctified the gift; so this is the great propitiation, which recommends the obnoxious persons, and unprofitable services of the believing world. In *this* may my soul be interested! By *this* may it be reconciled to the Father!—There is such a leprous depravity cleaving to my nature, as pollutes whatever I perform. My most profound adorations, and sincerest acts of religion, must not presume to *challenge* a reward, but humbly *implore* forgiveness ‡. Renouncing, therefore,

* Amos v. 21. 22. † Psal. xlv. 9.

‡ A writer of distinguished superiority, *thus* addresses the great Observer of actions, and Searcher of hearts; and vindicates *my* sentiments, while he so justly and beautifully utters his own:

Look down, great GOD, with pity's softest eye,
On a poor breathing particle in dust.

His

therefore, myſelf in every inſtance of duty, diſclaiming all ſhadow of confidence * in any deeds of my own, may I now, and evermore, *be accepted through the Beloved!*

WHAT *colours*, what charming colours, are here! Theſe ſo nobly bold; and thoſe ſo delicately languid. What a glow is enkindled in ſome! what a gloſs ſhines upon others! In one, methinks, I ſee the ruby with her bleeding radience; in another, the ſapphire with her ſky-tinctured blue; in all ſuch an exquiſite richneſs of dyes, as no other ſet of paintings in the univerſe can boaſt †.—With what a maſterly *ſkill* is every one of the varying tints *diſpoſed!* Here they ſeem to be thrown on with an eaſy daſh of ſecurity and freedom; there they are adjuſted by the niceſt touches of art and accuracy.

His crimes forgive; forgive his virtues too,
Thoſe *ſmaller faults*, *half-converts* to the right.
Night-Thoughts, N° IX.

* See page 44. & 45. in the *ſecond* edition of a moſt *candid* and *evangelical* little treatiſe, called CHRISTIANITY the great ORNAMENT of human life:—"If Chriſtians "happily avoid the *dangerous* extreme, and too often *fatal* "rock, of a dead *fruitleſs* faith on the one hand, he [*i. e.* "Satan] will endeavour, by all kind of plauſible inſinuations, "to ſplit them on the oppoſite, *viz.* ſpiritual pride, oſtentation and *dependence on their works*, as if THESE were the "*meritorious* or *procuring* cauſe of all true peace, hope, conſolation, and divine acceptance.—Now, this *ſelf-dependence* "may be ranked among the *moſt dangerous* of the infernal po"litics, becauſe the fatal poiſon lyes *deep*, and too often *un*"*diſcerned.*"

† ———*Who can paint*
Like Nature? *Can imagination boaſt*,
Amid his gay creation, hues like theſe?
And can he mix them with that matchleſs ſkill,
And lay them on ſo delicately fine,
And loſe them in each other, as appears
In ev'ry bud that blows? THOMS. Spring.

accuracy. Thoſe which form the ground, are always ſo judiciouſly choſen, as to heighten the luſtre of the ſuperadded figures; while the verdure of the impalement, or the ſhadings of the foliage, impart new livelineſs to the whole. Indeed, whether they are blended or arranged, ſoftened or contraſted, they are manifeſtly under the conduct of a taſte that never miſtakes, a felicity that never falls ſhort of, the very perfection of elegance.—Fine, inimitably fine, is the *texture* of the web, on which theſe ſhining treaſures are diſplayed. What are the labours of the *Perſian* looms, or the boaſted commodities of *Bruſſels*, compared with theſe curious manufactures of nature? Compared with theſe, the moſt admired chintzes loſe their reputation; even ſuperfine cambrics appear coarſe as canvas in their preſence.

What a chearing argument does our Saviour derive from hence, to ſtrengthen our *affiance* in GOD! He directs us to learn a leſſon of heaven-depending faith, from every bird that wings the air, and from every flower that bloſſoms in the field. If Providence, with unremitted care, ſupports thoſe inferior creatures, and arrays theſe inſenſible beings with ſo much ſplendor; ſurely he will in nowiſe with-hold from his elect children, "bread to eat, and raiment to put on."—Ye faithful followers of the Lamb, diſmiſs every low *anxiety*, relating to the needful *ſuſtenance* of life. He that feeds the ravens from an inexhauſtable magazine; he that paints the plants with ſuch ſurpaſſing elegance; in ſhort, he that provides ſo liberally, both for the animal and vegetable parts of his creation; will not, cannot, neglect his own people.—*Fear not, little flock*, ye peculiar objects of almighty love! *it is your Father's good pleaſure to give you a kingdom* *. And, if he freely gives you an everlaſting kingdom hereafter, is it poſſible to ſuppoſe, that he will deny you any neceſſary conveniencies here?

ONE

* Luke xii. 32.

ONE cannot forbear reflecting, in this place, on the too-prevailing humour, of being fond and oſtentatious of *dreſs* *. What abject and miſtaken ambition is this! How unworthy the dignity of *immortal*, and the wiſdom of *rational* beings! Eſpecially, ſince theſe little productions of the earth have indiſputably the pre-eminence

* Mr *Addiſon* has a fine remark on a female warrior, celebrated by *Virgil*. He obſerves, that, with all her other great qualities, this *little foible* mingled itſelf; becauſe, as the poet relates, an intemperate fondneſs for a rich and ſplendid ſuit of armour, betrayed her into ruin. In this circumſtance, our critic diſcovers a *moral* concealed; this he admires, as a neat, though oblique *ſatire*, on that trifling paſſion. *Spect.* vol. I. N°. 15.

I would refer it to the judicious reader, whether there is not a beauty of the *ſame* kind, but touched with a *more* maſterly hand, in the ſong of *Deborah*.—Speaking of *Siſera*'s mother, the ſacred euchariſtic ode repreſents her as anticipating, in her fond fancy, the victory of her ſon; and indulging the following ſoliloquy:—*Have they not ſped? have they not divided the prey? to* Siſera *a prey of divers colours; a prey of divers colours of needle-work; of divers colours of needle-work on both ſides; meet for the necks of them that take the ſpoil?*—She takes no notice of the ſignal ſervice, which her hero would do to his country, by quelling ſo dangerous an inſurrection. She never reflects on the *preſent* acclamations, the *future* advancement, and the *eternal* renown, which are the tribute uſually paid to a conqueror's merit. She can conceive, it ſeems, nothing greater, than to be clad in an embroidered veſture; and to trail along the ground, a robe of the richeſt dyes. This is, in *her imagination*, the moſt lordly ſpoil he can win; the moſt ſtately trophy he can erect.—It is alſo obſervable, how ſhe *dwells* upon the trivial circumſtance, reiterating it again and again. It has ſo charmed her ignoble heart, ſo entirely engroſſed her little views, that ſhe can *think* of nothing elſe, *ſpeak* of nothing elſe, and can hardly ever *deſiſt* from the darling topic.—Is not this a keen, though delicately couched cenſure, on that poor contemptible, grovelling taſte, which is enamoured with ſilken finery, and makes the *attributes* of a butterfly the *idol* of its affections?

eminence in such outward embellishments.—Go, clothe thyself with purple, and fine linen; trick thyself up in all the gay attire, which the shuttle or the needle can furnish: yet know, to the mortification of thy vanity, that the *native* elegance of a common daisy * eclipses all this *elaborate* finery.—Nay, wert thou decked like some illustrious princess, on her coronation-day, in all the splendor of royal apparel; couldst thou equal even *Solomon*, in the height of his magnificence and glory; yet would the meanest among the *flowery populace* outshine thee. Every discerning eye would give the preference to these beauties of the † ground.—Scorn then to borrow thy recommendations from a neat disposition of threads, and a curious arrangement of colours. Assume a becoming greatness of temper. Let thy endowments be of the immortal kind. Study to be *all-glorious within*. Be clothed with humility. Wear the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit ‡. To say all in a word, *Put on the* LORD JESUS CHRIST ‖: let

How conspicuous is the elevated and magnificent spirit of that venerable *mother* in *Israel*, when viewed in comparison with the low, the despicable turn of this *Canaannitish lady!*—Such strong and beautiful *contrasts* are, I think, some of the most striking excellencies of poetic painting: and in no book are they more frequently used, or expressed with greater life, than in the *sacred* volumes of inspiration.

* Peaceful and lowly in their native soil,
They neither know to spin, nor care to toil;
Yet with confess'd magnificence deride
Our mean attire, and impotence of pride. PRIOR.

† Mr *Cowley*, with his usual brilliancy of imagination, styles them *stars of earth.*

‡ How beautifully does the prophet describe the *furniture* of a renewed and heavenly *mind*, under the similitude of a rich and complete *suit* of *apparel! I will greatly rejoice in the* LORD; *my soul shall be joyful in my* GOD; *for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.* Is. lxi. 10.

‖ Rom. xiii. 14.

let his *blood* be ſprinkled upon thy conſcience, and it ſhall be whiter than the virgin-ſnows. Let his *righteouſneſs*, like a ſpotleſs robe, adorn thy inner man; and thou ſhalt be amiable, even in the moſt diſtinguiſhing eye of GOD. Let his bleſſed *Spirit* dwell in thy heart; and, under his ſanctifying operations, thou ſhalt be made partaker of a divine nature.

Theſe are real excellencies; truly noble accompliſhments theſe. In this manner be arrayed, be beautified; and thou wilt not find a rival in the feathers of a peacock, or the foliation of a tulip. Theſe will exalt thee far above the *low pretenſions* of lace and embroidery. Theſe will prepare thee to ſtand in the beatific preſence, and to take thy ſeat among the angels of light.

WHAT an inchanting *ſituation* is this! One can ſcarce be melancholy within the atmoſphere of flowers. Such lively hues, and delicious odours, not only addreſs themſelves agreeably to the ſenſes; but touch, with a ſurpriſing delicacy, the ſweeteſt movements of the mind:

——*To the heart inſpiring*
Vernal * *delight and joy.* MILT. b. iv.

How

* "I would have my reader endeavour to MORALIZE "this natural pleaſure of the ſoul, and to improve this *vernal* "*delight*, as *Milton* calls it, into a *Chriſtian virtue*. When "we find ourſelves inſpired with this pleaſing inſtinct, this "ſecret ſatisfaction and complacency, ariſing from the beauties "of the creation, let us conſider, to *whom* we ſtand indebted "for all theſe entertainments of ſenſe; and *who* it is that "thus opens his hand, and fills the world with good.—Such "an habitual diſpoſition of mind *conſecrates* every field and "wood; turns an *ordinary walk* into a morning and evening "ſacrifice; and will improve thoſe tranſient gleams, which "naturally brighten up and refreſh the ſoul on ſuch occaſions, "into an inviolable and perpetual ſtate of bliſs and happineſs." *Spect.* vol. V. N°. 394.

How often have I felt them diſſipate the *gloom* of thought, and transfuſe a ſudden gaiety through the dejected ſpirit! I cannot wonder, that kings deſcend from their *thrones*, to walk amidſt blooming ivory and gold; or retire from the moſt ſumptuous feaſt, to be recreated with the more refined ſweets of the garden. I cannot wonder, that queens forego, for a while, the compliments of a nation, to receive the tribute of the parterre; or withdraw from all the glitter of a *court*, to be attended with the more ſplendid *equipage* of a bed of flowers,—But if this be ſo pleaſing, what tranſporting pleaſure muſt ariſe from the fruition of uncreated excellency! O! what unknown delight, to enter into thy *immediate preſence*, moſt bleſſed LORD GOD! to ſee thee *, thou King of heaven, and LORD of glory, no longer "through a glaſs darkly, but face "to face!" to have all thy goodneſs, all thy greatneſs, ſhine before us; and be made glad for ever with the brighteſt diſcovery of thy perfections, with the ineffable joy of thy countenance.

This we cannot bear, in our preſent imperfect ſtate. The effulgence of unveiled divinity would dazzle a mortal ſight. Our feeble faculties would be *overwhelmed* with ſuch a fulneſs of ſuperabundant bliſs; and muſt lye *oppreſſed* under ſuch an exceeding great, eternal *weight* of glory.—But, when this corruptible hath put on incorruption, the powers of the ſoul will be greatly invigorated; and theſe earthly tabernacles will be

* *Iſaiah* repreſents the felicity of the righteous, in the everlaſting world, by this elegant and amiable image; *Thine eyes ſhall ſee the King in his beauty.*—*Milton* touches the ſame ſubject, with wonderful elevation and majeſty of thought:

They walk with GOD,
High in ſalvation, and the climes of bliſs,

Words, which, like the fiery car, almoſt tranſport our affections to thoſe glorious abodes.

Iſ. xxxiii. 17. MILT. b. XI. l. 707.

be transformed into the likeneſs of CHRIST's glorious body. Then, though "the moon ſhall be confounded, and the ſun aſhamed *," when the LORD of hoſts is revealed from heaven; yet ſhall his faithful people be enabled to *ſee him as he is* †.

Here then, my wiſhes, here be fixed. Be *this* your determined and invariable aim.—Here, my affections, here give a looſe to your whole ardour. Cry out, in the language of inſpiration, *This one thing have I deſired of the* LORD, *which*, with inceſſant earneſtneſs, *I will require; that I may dwell in the* celeſtial *houſe of the* LORD, *all the days of my* future *life; to behold the* fair *beauty of the* LORD ‡, and to contemplt e, with wonder and adoration—with unſpeakable and everlaſting rapture—all the attributes of the incomprehenſible Godhead.

SOLOMON, a moſt penetrating judge of human nature, knowing how highly mankind is charmed with the fine qualities of flowers, has figured out the bleſſed JESUS, that "faireſt among ten thouſand," by theſe lovely repreſentatives. He ſtyles him ‖ *the roſe of Sharon*, and *the lily of the valleys* ⊥; like the firſt, full of delights,

* Iſ. xxiv. 23. † 1 John iii. 2. ‡ Pſal. xxvii. 4. ‖ Cant. ii. 1.

Malus ut arboribus decori eſt, ut vitibus uvæ,
Utque roſæ campis, ut lilia vallibus alba,
Sic CHRISTUS *decus omne ſuis.*—

⊥ By the *lily of the valleys*, I apprehend, is meant, not the flower which commonly paſſes under that denomination, and is comparatively mean; but the grand, majeſtic, garden-lily, growing in a rich irriguous ſoil, where it flouriſhes in the moſt ample manner, and arrives at the higheſt perfection. The circumſtance of the valleys, added by the ſacred writer, is ſignificant not of the *ſpecies*, but of the *place*.—This is by far the nobleſt interpretation, and moſt exactly ſuitable to the ſpiritual ſenſe; which intimates, that the bleſſed JESUS delights to dwell, by the communications of his Spirit, in *humble* hearts. —שושנת העמקים *lilium vallibus gaudens.*

delights, and communicable graces; like the laſt, exalted in majeſty, and complete in beauty.—In that ſacred paſtoral, he ranges the creation; borrows its moſt finiſhed forms; and dips his pencil in its choiceſt dyes, to preſent us with a ſketch of the amiableneſs of his perſon: his amiableneſs, who is the light of the world; the glory of his church; the only hope, the ſovereign conſolation of ſinners; and exalted, infinitely exalted, not only above the ſublimeſt compariſon, but even "above all bleſſing and praiſe."—May I alſo make the ſame heavenly uſe of all ſublunary enjoyments! Whatever is pleaſurable or charming *below*, let it raiſe my deſire to thoſe delectable objects, which are *above*; which will yield, not partial, but perfect felicity; not tranſient, but never-ending, ſatisfaction and joy.—Yes, my ſoul, let theſe beauties in *miniature* always remind thee of that glorious perſon, in whom "dwells all the "*fulneſs* of the Godhead bodily." Let theſe little emanations teach thee to thirſt after the eternal fountain. O! may the creatures be thy conſtant clue to the Creator! For this is a certain truth, and deſerves thy frequent recollection, demands thy moſt attentive conſideration; that the whole compaſs of finite perfection, is only a faint *ray* *, ſhot from that immenſe ſource;—is only a ſmall *drop*, derived from that inexhauſtable ocean—of all good.

WHAT a ſurpriſing *variety* is obſervable among the flowery tribes! How has the bountiful hand of Providence diverſified theſe niceſt pieces of his workmanſhip! added the charms of an endleſs novelty, to all their other perfections!—A conſtant uniformity would ſoon

* —Thou ſitt'ſt above all heav'ns,
To us inviſible, or *dimly ſeen*
In theſe thy loweſt works; yet theſe declare
Thy goodneſs beyond thought, and pow'r divine.
MILT. book v.

ſoon render the entertainment tireſome, or inſipid; therefore every ſpecies is formed on a ſeparate plan, and exhibits ſomething entirely *new*. The faſhion ſpreads not from family to family; but every one has a mode of its own, which is truly original. The moſt curſory glance perceives an apparent difference, as well as a peculiar delicacy, in the *airs*, and *habits*, the *attitude* and *lineaments*, of every diſtinct claſs.

Some rear their heads with a majeſtic mien, and overlook, like *ſovereigns* or *nobles*, the whole parterre. Others ſeem more moderate in their aims, and advance only to the middle ſtations; a genius turned for heraldry might term them the *gentry* of the border. While others, free from all aſpiring views, creep unambitiouſly on the ground, and look like the *commonalty* of the kind.—Some are interſected with elegant *ſtripes*, or ſtudded with radiant *ſpots*. Some affect to be genteelly *powdered*, or neatly *fringed;* while others are plain in their aſpect, unaffected in their dreſs, and content to pleaſe with a naked *ſimplicity*. Some aſſume the monarch's *purple;* ſome look moſt becoming in the virgin's *white;* but *black*, doleful black, has no admittance into the wardrobe of ſpring. The weeds of mourning would be a manifeſt indecorum, when nature holds an univerſal feſtival. She would now inſpire none but delightful ideas, and therefore always makes her appearance in ſome * amiable ſuit—Here *ſtands* a warrior, clad with crimſon; there *ſits* a magiſtrate, robed in ſcarlet; and yonder *ſtruts* a pretty fellow, that ſeems to have dipped his plumes in the rainbow, and glitters in all the gay colours of that reſplendent arch. Some *riſe* into a curious cup, or *fall* into a ſet of beautiful bells. Some *ſpread* themſelves in a ſwelling tuft, or *croud* into a delicious cluſter.—In ſome, the predominant ſtain ſoftens by the gentleſt *diminutions*, till it has even ſtole away from itſelf. The eye

* —*Nunc formoſiſſimus annus.* VIRG.

eye is amuſed at the agreeable deluſion; and we wonder to find ourſelves inſenſibly decoyed into a quite different luſtre. In others, you would think, the fine tinges were emulous of pre-eminence. Diſdaining to mingle, they *confront* one another with the reſolution of rivals, determined to diſpute the prize of beauty; while each is improved, by the oppoſition, into the higheſt vivacity of complexion.

How manifold are thy werks *, O LORD! Multiplied even to a prodigy. Yet *in wiſdom*, conſummate wiſdom, *haſt thou made them all*.—How I admire the *vaſtneſs* of the contrivance, and the *exactneſs* of the execution! Man, feeble man, with difficulty accompliſhes a ſingle work. Hardly, and after many efforts, does he arrive at a tolerable imitation of ſome one production of nature. But the almighty Artiſt ſpoke millions of ſubſtances into inſtantaneous being; the whole collection wonderfully various, and each individual completely perfect —Repeated experiments generally, I might ſay always, diſcover errors or defects in *our* happieſt inventions. Nay, what wins our approbation, at the preſent hour, or in this particular place, is very probably, in ſome remote period, or ſome diſtant clime, treated with contempt. Whereas, *theſe* fine ſtructures have pleaſed every taſte, in every country, for almoſt ſix thouſand years. Nor has any † fault been detected in the original plan, nor any room left for the leaſt improvement upon the firſt model. —All our performances, the more *minutely* they are ſcanned, the more *imperfect* they appear. With regard to theſe delicate objects, the more we ſearch into their properties, the more we are raviſhed with their graces. They are ſure to diſcloſe freſh ſtrokes of the moſt maſterly

* Pſal. civ. 24.

† Eccleſ. iii. 14. *I know, that whatſoever* GOD *doth, it ſhall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it.*

maſterly ſkill, in proportion to the attention with which they are examined.

Nor is the *ſimplicity* of the *operation* leſs aſtoniſhing, than the accuracy of the workmanſhip, or the infinitude of the effects. Should you aſk, "Where, and "what are the materials which beautify the blooming "world? What rich tints, what ſplendid dyes, what "ſtores of ſhining crayons, ſtand by the heavenly "Limner, when he paints the robe of nature?" 'Tis anſwered, His powerful pencil needs no ſuch coſtly apparatus. A ſingle principle, under his conducting hand, branches out into an immenſity of the moſt varied, and moſt finiſhed forms. The *moiſture* of the earth, and of the circumambient air, paſſed thro' proper ſtrainers, and diſpoſed in a range of pellucid tubes; this performs all the wonders, and produces all the beauties, of vegetation. This *creeps* along the fibres of the low-ſpread moſs, and *climbs* to the very tops of the lofty-waving cedars. This, attracted by the root, and circulating thro' inviſible canals; this burſts into gems, expands itſelf into leaves, and clothes the foreſt with all its verdant honours.—This one *, *plain* and *ſimple*, cauſe, gives birth to all the charms, which deck the youth and maturity of the year. This *bluſhes* in the early hepatica, and *flames* in the late-advancing poppy. This *reddens* into blood in the veins of the mulberry; and *attenuates* itſelf into leafen gold, to create a covering for the quince. This *breathes* in all the fragrant gales of our garden, and *weeps* odorous gum in the groves of *Arabia*.—So † *wonderful* is our Creator *in counſel*, and ſo *excellent in working!*

* "When every ſeveral effect has a particular ſeparate "cauſe, this gives no pleaſure to the ſpectator, as not diſco-"vering contrivance. But that work is beheld with admira-"tion and delight, as the reſult of deep counſel, which is "*complicated* in its *parts*, and yet *ſimple* in its *operations*; "where a great variety of effects are ſeen to ariſe from one "principle operating uniformly." ABERNETHY *on the attri-"butes.*

† II. xxviii. 29.

In a grove of tulips, or a knot of pinks, one perceives a difference in almoſt every individual. Scarce any two are turned and tinctured exactly alike. Each allows himſelf a little *particularity* in his *dreſs*, tho' all belong to one family: ſo that they are various, and yet the ſame.—A pretty emblem this of the *ſmaller differences* between Proteſtant Chriſtians. There are modes in religion, which admit of variation, without prejudice to ſound faith, or real holineſs. Juſt as the drapery on theſe pictures of the ſpring, may be formed after a variety of patterns, without blemiſhing their beauty, or altering their nature.—Be it ſo then, that, in ſome points of inconſiderable conſequence, ſeveral of our brethren diſſent; yet let us all live amicably and ſociably together; for we harmonize in *principals*, tho' we vary in *punctilios*. Let us join in converſation, and intermingle intereſts; diſcover no eſtrangement of behaviour, and cheriſh no alienation of affection. If any ſtrife ſubſiſts, let it be to follow our divine Maſter moſt cloſely, in humility of heart, and unblameableneſs of life. Let it be to ſerve one another moſt readily, in all the kind offices of a cordial friendſhip. Thus ſhall be *united*, though *diſtinguiſhed;* united in the ſame grand fundamentals, tho' diſtinguiſhed by ſome ſmall circumſtantials; united in one important bond of brotherly love, though diſtinguiſhed by ſome ſlighter peculiarities of ſentiment.

Between Chriſtians, whoſe judgments diſagree only about a form of prayer, or manner of worſhip, I apprehend, there is no more *eſſential* difference, than between flowers which bloom from the ſame kind of ſeed, but happen to be ſomewhat diverſified in the mixture of their colours —Whereas, if *one* denies the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and degrades the incarnate God to the meanneſs of a mere creature; if *another* cries up the worthineſs of human works, and depretiates the alone-meritorious righteouſneſs of the

the glorious Mediator; if a *third* addreſſes the incommunicable honours to a finite being, and bows to the image, or prays to the ſaint;—theſe are errors, extremely derogatory to the REDEEMER's dignity, and not a little prejudicial to the comfort of his people. Againſt theſe to remonſtrate; againſt theſe to urge every argument, and uſe every diſſuaſive; beſpeaks not the cenſorious bigot, but the friend of truth, and the lover of mankind.—Whereas, to ſtand neuter and ſilent, while ſuch principles are propagated, would be an inſtance of criminal remiſſneſs, rather than of Chriſtian moderation.—For the *perſons*, we will not fail to maintain a tender compaſſion; we will not ceaſe to put up earneſt interceſſions; we will alſo acknowledge and love whatever is excellent and amiable in their character: Yet we dare not ſubſcribe their *creed;* we cannot remit our aſſiduous, but kind endeavours, if by any means we may reconcile them to a more *ſcriptural* belief, and a *purer* worſhip *.

ANOTHER circumſtance, recommending and endearing the flowery creation, is their *regular ſucceſſion*. They make not their appearance all at once, but in an orderly rotation. While a proper number of theſe obliging retainers are in-waiting, the others abſcond; but hold themſelves in a poſture of ſervice, ready to take their turn, and fill each his reſpective ſtation, the inſtant

* In ſome former editions, I expreſſed myſelf, on this point, *unwarily* and *harſhly*. But my meaning, and real ſentiments, were no other than thoſe repreſented above.—The reader, from ſuch unguarded intimations, might too naturally be led to conclude, that the author avows, and would ſtir up, a ſpirit of *perſecution*. But this is a method of dealing with opponents in religious doctrines, which he diſclaims, as abſurd; and abhors, as iniquitous. He is for no force, but that of rational conviction; for no conſtraint, but that of affectionate perſuaſion. *Thus*, if you pleaſe, *compel them to come in*, Luke xiv. 23.

inſtant it becomes vacant.—The *ſnowdrop*, foremoſt of the lovely train, breaks her way through the frozen ſoil, in order to preſent her early compliments to her lord. Dreſſed in the robe of innocency, ſhe ſteps forth, fearleſs of danger; long before the trees have ventured to unfold their leaves, even while the icicles are pendent on our houſes.—Next, peeps out the *crocus*, but cautiouſly, and with an air of timidity. She hears the howling blaſts, and ſkulks cloſe to her low ſituation. Afraid ſhe ſeems to make large excurſions from her root, while ſo many ruffian winds are abroad, and ſcouring along the æther.—Nor is the *violet* laſt, in this ſhining embaſſy of the year; which, with all the embelliſhments that would grace a royal garden, condeſcends to line our hedges, and grow at the feet of briers. Freely, and without any ſolicitation, ſhe diſtributes the bounty of her emiſſive ſweets: while herſelf, with an exemplary humility, retires from ſight; ſeeking rather to adminiſter pleaſure, than to win admiration *. Emblem, expreſſive emblem, of thoſe *modeſt* virtues, which delight to bloom in obſcurity; which extend a chearing influence to multitudes, who are ſcarce acquainted with the ſource of their comforts! Motive, engaging motive, to that *ever-active* beneficence, which ſtays not for the importunity of the diſtreſſed, but anticipates their ſuit, and prevents them with the bleſſings of its goodneſs!—The poor *polyanthus*, that lately adorned the border with her ſparkling beauties, and, tranſplanted into our windows, gave us a freſh entertainment, is now no more. I ſaw her complexion fade; I perceived her breath decay; till at length ſhe expired, and dropt into her grave.—Scarce have we ſuſtained this loſs, but in comes the *auricula*, and more than retrieves it. Arrayed ſhe comes, in a ſplendid variety of amiable forms; with an eye of cryſtal, and garments of the moſt gloſſy ſatin; exhaling perfume, and

* *Prodeſſe quam conſpici.*

and powdered with silver. A very distinguished procession this! The favourite care of the florist! Scarce one among them, but is dignified with a character of renown, or has the honour to represent some celebrated toast. But these also, notwithstanding their illustrious titles, have exhausted their whole stock of fragrance, and are mingled with the meanest dust.—Who could forbear grieving at their departure, did not the *tulips* begin to raise themselves on their fine wands, or stately stalks? They flush the parterre with one of the gayest dresses that blooming nature wears. Did ever *beau* or *belle* make so gaudy an appearance, in a birth-night suit? Here one may behold the innocent wantonness of beauty. Here she indulges a thousand freaks, and sports herself in the most charming diversity of colours. Yet I should wrong her, were I to call her a *coquet;* because she plays her lovely changes, not to enkindle dissolute affections, but to display her Creator's glory.—Soon arises the *anemone;* encircled at the bottom with a spreading robe, and rounded at the top into a beatiful dome. In its loosely-flowing mantle, you may observe a noble negligence; in its gently-bending tufts, the nicest symmetry. I would term it the *fine gentleman* of the garden; because it seems to have learned the singular address of uniting simplicity with refinement, of reconciling art and ease.—The same month has the merit of producing the *ranunculus*. All bold and graceful, it expands the riches of its foliage; and acquires, by degrees, the loveliest enamel in the world. As persons of intrinsic worth disdain the superficial arts of recommendation, practised by *fops;* so this lordly flower scorns to borrow any of its excellence from powders and essences. It needs no such attractives, to render it the darling of the curious; being sufficiently engaging from the elegance of its figure, the radiant variety of its tinges, and a certain superior dignity of aspect. Methinks nature improves in her operations.

Her

Her lateſt ſtrokes are moſt maſterly. To crown the collection, ſhe introduces the *carnation;* which captivates every eye, with a noble ſpread of graces; and charms another ſenſe, with a profuſion of exquiſite odours. This ſingle flower has centered in itſelf, the perfections of all the preceding The moment it appears, it ſo commands our attention, that we ſcarce regret the abſence of the reſt.—The *gillyflower*, like a real friend, attends you through all the viciſſitudes and alterations of the ſeaſon. While others make a tranſient viſit only, this is rather an inhabitant, than a gueſt in your gardens; adds *fidelity* to *complaiſance*.

It is in vain to attempt a catalogue of theſe amiable gifts. There is an endleſs *multiplicity* in their characters, yet an invariable *order* in their approaches. Every month, almoſt every week, has its peculiar ornaments; not ſervilely copying the works of its predeceſſor, but forming, ſtill forming, and ſtill executing ſome new deſign. So laviſh is the fancy, yet ſo exact the proceſs, of nature!

Here let me ſtand a while, to contemplate this *diſtribution* of flowers, through the ſeveral periods of the year.—Were they all to bloſſom together, there would be at once a promiſcuous *throng*, and at once a total *privation*. We ſhould ſcarce have an opportunity of adverting to the dainty qualities of half; and muſt ſoon loſe the agreeable company of them all. But now ſince every ſpecies has a ſeparate poſt to occupy, and a diſtinct interval for appearing, we can take a leiſurely and minute ſurvey of each ſucceeding ſet. We can view and review their forms; enter into a more intimate acquaintance with their charming accompliſhments; and receive all thoſe pleaſing ſervices, which they are commiſſioned to yield.—This remarkable piece of œconomy, is productive of another very valuable effect. It not only places in the moſt advantageous light, every particular community; but is alſo a ſure proviſionary reſource againſt the frailty of the whole nation.

nation. Or, to speak more truly, it renders the flowery tribes a sort of * *immortal* corps. For though some are continually dropping; yet, by this expedient, others are as continually rising, to beautify our borders, and prolong the entertainment.

WHAT *goodness* is this, to provide such a series of gratifications for mankind! both to diversify, and perpetuate the fine collation! to take care, that our paths should be, in a manner, incessantly strewed with flowers!—And what *wisdom*, to bid every one of these insensible beings know the precise juncture for their coming forth! insomuch that no actor on a stage can be more exact in performing his part; can make a more regular entry, or a more punctual exit.

WHO emboldens the *daffodil* to venture abroad in *February*, and to trust her flowering gold with inclement and treacherous skies? Who informs the various tribes of *fruit-bearing blossoms*, that vernal suns, and a more genial warmth, are fittest for their delicate texture? Who teaches the *clove* to stay, till hotter beams are prepared, to infuse a spicy richness into her odours, and tincture her complexion with the deepest crimson?—Who disposes these beautiful troops into such orderly bodies, *retarding* some, and *accelerating* others? Who has instructed them to *file off*, with such perfect regularity, as soon as the duty of their respective station is over? And, when one detachment retires, who gives the signal for another immediately to *advance*? Who, but that unerring Providence, which, from the highest thrones of angels, to the very lowest degrees of

* In allusion to the celebrated practice of the *Persian* kings; "who maintained, for their lifeguard, a body of troops, called *Immortal*; because it perpetually subsisted; for as soon "as any of the men died, another was immediately put into "his place." ROLLIN'S *ancient history*, vol. II.

of exiſtence, orders all things in " number, weight, " and meaſure !"

Theſe, O my ſoul, are the regulations of that moſt adorable, that moſt beneficent Being, who bowed the heavens ; came down to dwell on earth ; and united the *frailty* of thy mortal nature, to all the *glories* of his Godhead. All the honour of this admirable eſtabliſhment belongs to thy Ranſom, thy Surety, thy Saviour. To HIM it belongs, who ſuſtained the *vengeance*, which thou hadſt deſerved, and waſt doomed to ſuffer ; who fulfilled the *obedience*, which thou waſt obliged, but unable to perform ; and who humbled himſelf (ſtupendous, ineffable loving-kindneſs !) humbled himſelf to death, even the death of the croſs.—He formed this vaſt machine, and adjuſted its nice dependencies. The pillars that ſupport it, the embelliſhments that adorn it, and the laws that govern it, are the reſult of his unſearchable counſels. O ! the *heights* of his majeſty, and the *depths* of his abaſement !

Which ſhall we admire moſt, his eſſential *greatneſs*, or his free *grace?* He created the exalted ſeraph, that ſings in glory ; and every the minuteſt inſect, that flutters in air, or crawls in duſt. He marks out a path for all thoſe globes of light, which travel the circuit of the ſkies ; and diſdains not to rear the violet from its lowly bed, or to plait the daiſy which dreſſes our plains. So *grand* are his operations ; yet ſo *condeſcending* his regards !—If ſummer, like a ſparkling bride, is brilliant and glorious in her apparel ; what is this, but a feeble reflection of his uncreated *effulgence?* If autumn, like a munificent hoſt, opens her ſtores, and gives us all things richly to enjoy ; what is this but a little taſte of his inexhauſtible *liberality?* If thunders roar, you hear the ſound of his trumpet ; if lightnings glare, you ſee the launching of his glittering ſpear : if " the perpetual hills be ſcattered, and the " everlaſting mountains bowed," you behold a *diſplay ;*—no, ſays the prophet, you have rather *the hiding*

ding of his power ‡. So immenſe is his power, ſo uncontrollable and inconceivable, that all theſe mighty works are but a *ſketch*, in which more is concealed than diſcovered.

Thus, I think, we ſhould always view the viſible ſyſtem, with an evangelical *teleſcope*, (if I may be allowed the expreſſion,) and with an evangelical *microſcope;* regarding CHRIST JESUS as the great projector and architect; who planned and executed, the amazing

‡ *Hab.* iii. 4. Nothing can be more magnificently conceived, than the *imagery* of this whole chapter; and, upon the foot of our interpretation, nothing was ever more delicately and nobly turned, than the *ſentiment* of this clauſe. Other ſenſes of the paſſage, I acknowledge, may be aſſigned with equal propriety. But none, I think, can be imagined ſo *majeſtic* and *ſublime*. As the original will fairly admit of it; as it carries no diſagreement with the context; and expreſſes a moſt important, as well as undoubted truth; I hope, I may be permitted to uſe it, at leaſt by way of accommodation.—Eſpecially, as it ſuggeſts one of the fineſt *mottoes* imaginable, wherewith to inſcribe all the viſible productions of the Creator's hand. When ſtruck with aſtoniſhment, we conſider their grandeur, beauty, and conſummate perfections; let us, in juſtice to their author, apply the exalted reflection of this ſacred ode: "In all theſe *is the hiding*, rather than an adequate diſplay, *of his* matchleſs *power*. Tho' they challenge "our praiſe, and ſurpaſs our comprehenſion; yet are they by no "means the utmoſt exertions, but rather ſome ſlighter eſſays, "of omnipotent ſkill."—*Milton*, relating the overthrow of the fallen angels, introduces a grand circumſtance, not much unlike the preceding. *Meſſiah*, unaided and alone, had routed an innumerable hoſt of apoſtate ſpirits. This was great and marvellous. But to create a juſter idea of the illuſtrious Conqueror, our poet beautifully adds,

Yet half his ſtrength he put not forth.

If we forget to make the ſame remark, when we contemplate GOD in his works; we muſt neceſſarily form very ſcanty conceptions of that SUPREME BEING, before whom all nations are as a "drop of a bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt "of the balance."

amazing ſcheme. Whatever is magnificent or valuable, tremendous or amiable, ſhould ever be aſcribed to the Redeemer. This is the Chriſtian's *natural philoſophy*. With regard to this method of conſidering the things that are ſeen, we have an inſpired apoſtle for our preceptor and precedent. Speaking of CHRIST, he ſays, "Thou, LORD, in the beginning, haſt laid the "foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the "work of thy hands."—Did we carefully attend to this leading principle, in all our examinations of nature; it would, doubtleſs, be a moſt powerful means of *enkindling* our love, and * *ſtrengthening* our faith. When I look round upon millions of noble ſubſtances, and

* The apoſtles, I obſerve, delight to uſe this method of diſplaying the *honours* of the Redeemer, and eſtabliſhing the *faith* of his people.—The beloved diſciple, teaching that moſt precious doctrine, "of a Lamb ſlain to take away the ſins of the "world;" in order to evince the ſufficiency of CHRIST's ſacrifice for this bleſſed purpoſe, affirms, that *all things were made by him; and without him was not any thing*, no, not ſo much as one ſingle being, *made*, John i. 3.—St *Paul*, preaching the ſame glad tidings to the *Coloſſians*, and expreſſly maintaining, that we have redemption through his blood, ſeems to foreſee an objection of this kind. "To expiate tranſgreſſions againſt "an infinite Majeſty, is a moſt prodigious act. It muſt coſt "vaſtly more than any common ſurety can pay, to redeem a "ſinful world. What reaſon have we to believe, that JESUS "is equal to this mighty undertaking?" All poſſible reaſon, replies the apoſtle, from the dignity of his perſon, for he is *the image of the inviſible* GOD; and from the greatneſs of his works, for *by him all things were made*. Conſider the operations of his hands, and you cannot doubt the atoning efficacy of his death, *Col.* i. 15. 16.—The author of the epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, falls exactly into the ſame train of arguing. Declaring, that CHRIST JESUS has purged our ſins by the ſacrifice of himſelf, he proves his ample ability for this tremendous office, from his eſſential excellence, becauſe he is the *brightneſs of his Father's glory*; and from his admirable works, becauſe *he made the worlds, and upholdeth all things by the word of*

and carry with me this transporting reflection, "The "Maker of them all expired on a cross for me;" how can I remain any longer indifferent? Must not the *coldest* heart begin to glow with gratitude?—When I survey an immensity of the finest productions imaginable, and remember, that the Author of them all is "my righteousness and my redemption;" how can I chuse but repose the most *chearful* confidence in such a Mediator?

Let me add one more remark, upon the admirable *adjustment* of every particular relating to these fine colonies planted in the parterre.—With such accuracy and correctness is their structure finished, that any the least conceivable alteration would very much impair their perfection. Should you see, for instance, the nice disposition of the *tulip*'s attire fly abroad, disorderly and irregular, like the flaunting *woodbine;* should the *jessamine* rear her diminutive head, on those grand columns which support the *hollihock;* should the erect and manly aspect of the *piony* hang down with a pensive air, like the flexile bells of the *hyacinth;* should that noble plainness which distinguishes the *lily*, be exchanged for the glittering fringes which edge the *pink*, or the gaudy stains which bedrop the *iris;* should those tapering pillars which arise in the middle of its vase, and, tipt with golden pendants, give such a lustre to the surrounding pannels of alabaster,—should those sink and disappear, like the chives which cover the heart of the anemone:—in many of these cases, would not the transposition be fantastical and awkward? in all, to the apparent *prejudice* of every individual?

Again,

of his power, Heb. i. 2, 3.—Which truth, as it is so important in itself, of such signal comfort to Christians, and so particularly insisted on by the inspired writers, I hope, I shall need no apology for an attempt to illustrate and enforce it, in a kind of evangelical *Descant* upon *creation*, annexed to these reflections.

Again, with regard to the *time* of their appearing, this circumſtance is ſettled, by a remarkable foreſight and precaution. What would become of the *ſailor*, if, in very ſtormy weather, he ſhould raiſe a lofty maſt, and croud it with all his canvas? Such would be the ill effect, if the moſt ſtately ſpecies of flowers ſhould preſume to come abroad, in the bluſtering months. Ah! how would they rue the imprudent boldneſs! Therefore thoſe only that ſhoot the ſhorteſt ſtems, and diſplay the ſmalleſt ſpread of leaves, or (if you pleaſe) carry the leaſt ſail, are launched amidſt the blowing ſeaſons.—How injudiciouſly would the *perfumer* act, if he ſhould unſeal his fineſt eſſences, and expoſe them to the northern winds, or wintry rains! Our blooming artiſts of the aromatic profeſſion, at leaſt the moſt delicate among them, ſeem perfectly aware of the conſequences of ſuch a procedure. Accordingly they poſtpone the opening of their odoriferous treaſures, till a ſerener air, and more * unclouded ſkies grant, a protection to their amiable traffic; till they are under no more

* *Caſimir*, in a very poetical manner, addreſſes himſelf to the dormant roſe, and moſt prettily invites her to *venture abroad*, by the mention of theſe two circumſtances:

Siderum ſacros imitata vultus,
Quid latet dudum, Roſa? Delicatum
Effer e terris caput, O tepentis
Filia cœli.

Jam tibi nubes *fugiunt* aquoſæ,
Quas fugant albis Zephyri *quadrigis;*
Jam tibi mulcet Boream *jocantis*
Aura Favoni.

Child of the ſummer, charming Roſe,
No longer in confinement lye;
Ariſe to light; thy form diſcloſe;
Rival the ſpangles of the ſky.

The *rains* are gone; the ſtorms are o'er;
Winter retires to make thee way:

Come

more apprehenſions of having their ſpicy cells rifled by rude blaſts, or drowned in inceſſant ſhowers.

What a ſtriking argument is here for *reſignation;* unfeigned reſignation, to all the diſpoſals of *Providence!* Too often are our diſſatisfied thoughts apt to find fault with divine diſpenſations. We tacitly arraign our Maker's conduct, or queſtion his kindneſs with regard to ourſelves. We fancy our lot not ſo commodiouſly ſituated, or our condition not ſo happily circumſtanced, as if we had been placed in ſome other ſtation of life.—But let us behold this exquiſitely nice regulation of the *minuteſt* plants, and be aſhamed of our *repining* folly. Could any fibre in their compoſition be altered, or one line in their features be tranſpoſed, without clouding ſome of their beauties? Could any fold in their veſtments be varied, or any link in their orderly ſucceſſion be broken, without injuring ſome delicate property? And does not that all-ſeeing eye, which preſerves ſo exact a harmony among theſe *pretty toys*, maintain as watchful a care over his *rational creatures?* Does he chuſe the propereſt ſeaſon for the cowſlip to ariſe, and drink the dews? And can he neglect the concerns, or misjudge the conveniences, of his ſons and daughters? He, who has ſo completely diſpoſed whatever pertains to the vegetable œconomy, that the leaſt diminution or addition would certainly hurt the finiſhed ſcheme, does, without all peradventure, preſide, with equal attention, over the intereſts of his own people.

Be ſtill, then, thou uneaſy mortal*; know, that GOD is unerringly wiſe; and be aſſured, that, amidſt the

Come then, thou ſweetly-bluſhing flow'r;
Come, lovely ſtranger, come away.

The *ſun* is dreſs'd in beaming *ſmiles*,
To give thy beauties to the day:
Young *zephyrs* wait, with gentleſt *gales*,
To fan thy boſom, as they play.

* *Permittas ipſis expendere numinibus, quid*
Conveniat nobis, rebuſque ſit utile noſtris. *Nam*

the greateſt multiplicity of beings, he does not overlook thee. Thy Saviour has given me authority to aſſert, that thou art of far ſuperior value, in the eſtimate of Omnipotence, than all the herbage of the field. —If his ſacred will ordains *ſickneſs* for thy portion, never dare to imagine, that uninterrupted health would be more advantageous. If he pleaſes to with-hold, or take away, *children*; never preſume to conclude, that thy happineſs is blaſted, becauſe thy hopes of an increaſing family are diſappointed. He, that marſhals all the ſtarry hoſt, and ſo accurately arranges every the meaneſt ſpecies of herbs; HE orders all the *peculiarities*, all the *changes* of thy ſtate, with a vigilance that nothing can elude, with a goodneſs that endureth for ever.—Bow thy head, therefore, in humble acquieſcence. Reſt ſatisfied, that *whatever is* by the appointment of heaven *, *is right*, is beſt.

AMONG

Nam pro jucundis aptiſſima *quæque dabunt dii:*
Carior eſt illis homo, quam ſibi.— JUV.

Since all the downward tracts of time
GOD's watchful eye ſurveys;
O! who ſo wiſe to chuſe our lot,
And regulate our ways?

Since none can doubt his equal love,
Unmeaſurably kind;
To his *unerring*, *gracious* will,
Be ev'ry wiſh reſign'd.

Good when he gives, ſupremely good;
Nor leſs, when he denies;
Ev'n croſſes, from his ſov'reign hand,
Are bleſſings in diſguiſe.

* *Whatever is, is right.*—If Mr *Pope* underſtands the maxim according to the *limitation* ſuggeſted above, he ſpeaks a moſt undeniable and glorious truth. But if that great poet includes whatever comes to paſs, through the wild and extravagant paſſions of men; ſurely no thinking perſon, at leaſt no Chriſtian, can accede to his opinion.—What GOD orders, is *wiſe*, beyond all poſſibility of correction; and *good*, above all that we

can

AMONG all the productions of the third creating-day, this of flowers seems to be peculiarly designed for man. Man has the *monopoly* of this favour; it is conferred on him by a sort of exclusive charter. See the *imperial crown*, splendid and beautifully grand! See the *tuberose*, delicate and languishing fair! See all the pomp and glory of the parterre, where paint and perfume do wonders. Yet the inferior animals are neither smit with their beauties, nor regaled with their odours. The horse never stands still to gaze upon their charms; nor does the ox turn aside to browse upon their sweets. Senses they have to discern these curious objects in the *gross*, but no taste to *distinguish* or relish their fine accomplishments.—Just so, carnal and unenlightened men may understand the literal meaning of scripture, may comprehend the evidences of its divine inspiration; yet have no *relish* of the heavenly truths it teaches, no ardent *longing* for the spiritual blessings it offers; see "no form or comeliness" in the Saviour it describes, so as to render him the *supreme* desire of their souls.

The *chief* end of these beautiful appearances, philosophers

can ask or think. His decrees are the result of infinite discernment; and his dispensations the issues of unbounded benevolence.—But man, fallen man, is hurried away, by his lusts, into a thousand irregularities; which are deplorably evil in *themselves*, and attended with *consequences* manifestly pernicious to society.—Let the sentiment, therefore, be restrained to the disposals of heaven, and I most readily subscribe it. But, if it be extended to the conduct of men, and the effects of their folly; I think myself obliged to enter my protest against it. For whatever kindles the divine indignation,—is cause of final ruin to the author,—is strictly forbidden by GOD's holy word,—is contrary to the whole design of his revealed will, and the very reverse of his essential attributes:—*this* cannot possibly be right; *this* is most undoubtedly wrong. Omnipotence, indeed, can over-rule it, and educe good from it: but the very notion of *over-ruling*, supposes it to be absolutely *wrong* in itself.

ſophers ſay, is to enfold and cheriſh the embryo ſeed, or to ſwathe the tender body during its infant ſtate.—But, whatever is the chief end of nature, 'tis certain, ſhe never departs from the deſign of adminiſtering *delight* to mankind *. This is inſeparably connected with her other views.—Were it only to ſecure a reproductive principle, what need of ſuch *elegant complications?* why ſo much art employed, and ſo many decorations added? Why ſhould veſtments be prepared, richer than brocades, more delicate than lawns, and of a finer glow than the moſt admired velvets?—If the great mother had no other aim than barely to accommodate her little offspring, warm flannel, or homely fuſtian, would have ſerved her turn; ſerved it full as well as the moſt ſumptuous tiſſues, or all the furniture of the mercer's ſhop.

Evident then it is, that flowers were endued with ſuch enchanting graces for the *pleaſure* of *man*. In purſuance of this original intention, they have always paid their court to the human race; they ſtill ſeem particularly ſolicitous of recommending themſelves to our regard. The fineſt of each ſpecies croud about our habitations, and are rarely to be ſeen at a diſtance from our abodes. They *thrive* under our cultivating hand, and obſerving eye; but degenerate, and *pine away*, if unregarded by their lord.—To win his attention, and deck his retreats, they hide their deformities under ground; and diſplay nothing but the moſt *graceful* forms, and *engaging* colours, to his ſight.—To merit a farther degree of his eſteem, the generality

* "We find that the moſt important parts in the vegetable "world, are thoſe which are the moſt beautiful. Theſe are "the ſeeds by which the ſeveral races of plants are propagated "and continued, and which are always lodged in flowers or "bloſſoms. Nature ſeems to hide her principal deſign, and to "be induſtrious in making the earth gay and delightful, while "ſhe is carrying on her great work, and intent upon her own "preſervation." *Spect.* vol. v. N° 387.

ty of them diſpenſe a delightful perfume. What is ſtill more obliging, they * reſerve their *richeſt* exhalations, to embalm his morning and evening walks †. Becauſe he uſually chuſes thoſe cool hours to recreate himſelf among their blooming ranks; therefore, at thoſe hours, they are moſt laviſh of their fragrance, and breathe out their choiceſt ſpirits.

O MAN, greatly beloved by thy Creator! the darling of Providence! thou art diſtinguiſhed by *his goodneſs;* diſtinguiſh thyſelf alſo by *thy gratitude*. Be it thy one undivided aim to glorify him, who has been at ſo much expence to gratify thee!—While all theſe inferior creatures, in *ſilent* eloquence, declare the glory of GOD, do thou lend them thy *tongue*. Be thou the high prieſt of the mute creation. Let their praiſes become vocal in thy ſongs.—Adore the ſupreme Benefactor, for the bleſſings he ſhowers down upon every order of beings. Adore him for numberleſs mercies, which are appropriated to thyſelf. But, above all, adore him for that noble gift of a *rational* and *immortal* ſoul. —This conſtitutes us maſters of the globe, and gives us the real enjoyment of its riches. This diſcovers ten thouſand beauties, which otherwiſe had been loſt; and renders them both a ſource of delights, and a nurſery of devotion.—By virtue of this exalted principle, we are qualified to admire our Maker's works, and capable of *bearing* his illuſtrious *image;* bearing his illuſtrious image, not only when theſe ornaments of the ground

* ———The flow'rs,
That open *now* their choiceſt boſom'd ſmells,
Reſerv'd from night, and *kept for thee in ſtore*. MILT.

† The twining jas'mine, and the bluſhing roſe,
With laviſh grace their *morning*-ſcents diſcloſe;
The ſmelling tuberoſe and jonquil declare
The ſtronger impulſe of an *ev'ning*-air.
PRIOR's *Sol.*

ground have reſigned their honours, but when the great origin of day is extinguiſhed in the ſkies, and all the flaming orbs on high are put out in obſcure darkneſs.—*Then* to ſurvive, to ſurvive the ruins of one world, and to enjoy GOD,—to reſemble GOD, —to be "filled with all the fulneſs of GOD," in another;—what a happineſs, what an ineſtimable happineſs, is this! Yet *this* is thy privilege, (barter it not for trifles of an hour!) this thy glorious prerogative, O man!

O! THE goodneſs, the *exuberant goodneſs*, of our GOD! I cannot forbear celebrating it once more, before I paſs to another conſideration.—How much ſhould we think ourſelves obliged to a generous friend, who ſhould *build* a ſtately edifice *, purely for our abode! But how greatly would the obligation be increaſed, if the

* I cannot perſuade myſelf, that the compariſon is ſtretched beyond proper bounds, when carried to this pitch. It is my ſtedfaſt opinion, that the world, at leaſt this lower world, with its various appurtenances, was intended *purely* for man; that it is *appropriated* to him; and that he (in ſubordination to GOD's glory) is the *end* of its creation.—Other animals, 'tis true, partake of the Creator's benefits: but then they partake under the notion of man's domeſtics, or on the foot of retainers to him; as creatures which bear ſome relation to his ſervice, and ſome way or other contribute to his good. So that ſtill he is the *centre* of the whole; or, as our incomparable *Milton*, equally maſter of poetry and divinity, expreſſes himſelf, *All things live for man. Par. Loſt*, b. XI. l. 161.

Mr *Pope*, in his Ethic Epiſtles, is pleaſed to explode this tenet, as the height of *pride*, and a groſs *abſurdity*.—For my part, I ſee no reaſon for ſuch a charge. With all ſubmiſſion to ſo ſuperior a genius, it ſeems very remote from pride, to be duly ſenſible of favours vouchſafed; to contemplate them in all the extent of their munificence, and acknowledge them accordingly. I ſhould rather imagine, that to contract their ſize, when they are immenſely large; to ſtint their number, when they are altogether innumerable; that ſuch a procedure

the hand that built ſhould alſo *furniſh* it! and not only furniſh it with all that is commodious and comfortable, but *ornament* it alſo with whatever is ſplendid and delightful! *This* has our moſt indulgent Creator done, in a manner infinitely ſurpaſſing all we could wiſh or imagine.

The

cedure favours more of *inſenſibility*, than our hypotheſis of preſumption; and has more in it of *ingratitude*, than that of arrogance.

And how can it be deemed an abſurdity, to maintain that GOD gave us *a world* for our poſſeſſion, when it is our duty to believe, that he gave us his *only Son* for our propitiation? Sure, it can be neither difficult, nor extravagant, to ſuppoſe, that he deſigned the habitable globe, with its whole furniture, for our preſent uſe; ſince he with-held not his holy child JESUS, but freely delivered him up for our final ſalvation.

Upon the whole, I cannot but conclude, that the attempt of our famous poet is neither *kind* with regard to his fellow-creatures,—nor *grateful* with regard to his Creator,—neither is his ſcheme, in fact, *true*. The attempt not *kind*, with regard to man; becauſe it robes him of one of the moſt delightful and raviſhing contemplations imaginable. To conſider the great Author of exiſtence as having *me* in his eye, when he formed univerſal nature; as contriving all things with an immediate view to the exigencies of my particular ſtate; and making them all in ſuch a manner, as might be moſt conducive to my particular advantage; this muſt occaſion the ſtrongeſt ſatisfactions, whenever I caſt a glance on the objects that ſurround me.—Not *grateful* with regard to GOD; becauſe it has the moſt direct tendency to diminiſh our ſenſe of his kindneſs, and by that means to throw a damp upon our gratitude. It teaches us to look upon ourſelves as almoſt loſt among a croud of other beings, or regarded only with an occaſional and incidental beneficence; which muſt certainly weaken the diſpoſition, and indeed ſlacken the ties, to the moſt adoring thankfulneſs.—To which, I apprehend, we may juſtly add, Neither is the ſcheme, in fact, *true*. For, not to mention what might be urged from the ſure word of revelation, this one argument appears ſufficiently concluſive. The world began with man; the world muſt ceaſe with man; conſequently, the grand uſe, the

principal

The *earth* is assigned us for a dwelling.—The *skies* are stretched over us like a magnificent canopy, dyed in the purest azure; and beautified, now with pictures of floating silver, now with colourings of reflected crimson.—The *grass* is spread under us, as a spacious carpet; wove with silken threads of green, and damasked with flowers of every hue.—The *sun*, like a golden lamp, is hung out in the ethereal vault; and pours his effulgence, all the day, to lighten our paths.—When night approaches, the *moon* takes up the friendly office; and the *stars* are kindled in twinkling myriads, to chear the darkness with their milder lustre, not disturb our repose by too intense a glare.—The *clouds*, besides the rich paintings they hang around the heavens, act the part of a shifting screen; and defend us, by their seasonable interposition, from the scorching beams of summer. May we not also regard them, as the great watering-pots of the globe; which, wafted on the wings of the wind, dispense their moisture

principal end of the world, is, to subserve the interest of man, It is on all sides agreed, that the edifice was erected, when man was to be furnished with an habitation; and that it will be demolished, when man has no farther need of its accommodations. When he enters into the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, "the earth, and all the works "that are therein, shall be burnt up." From which it seems a very obvious and fair deduction, That man is the *final cause* of this inferior creation.

So that I think my readers and myself *privileged* (not to say, on the principles of gratitude, *obliged)* to use those lovely lines of our author, with a propriety and truth equal to their elegance and beauty:

For me *kind nature wakes her genial pow'r,*
Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r!
Annual, for me, *the grape, the rose renew*
The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
For me, *the mine a thousand treasures brings;*
For me, *health gushes from a thousand springs.*

Eth. Ep. I. *ver.* 129.

ture * evenly thro' the univerſal garden; and fructify, with their ſhowers, whatever our hand plants.—The *fields* are our exhauſtleſs granary.—The *ocean* is our vaſt reſervoir.—The *animals* ſpend their ſtrength, to diſpatch our buſineſs; reſign their cloathing, to repleniſh our wardrobe; and ſurrender their very lives, to provide for our tables.—In ſhort, every *element* is a ſtorehouſe of conveniencies; every *ſeaſon* brings us the choiceſt productions; all *nature* is our caterer.—And, which is a moſt endearing recommendation of theſe favours, they are all as lovely as they are uſeful. You obſerve nothing mean or inelegant. All is clad in *beauty*'s faireſt robe †, and regulated by *proportion*'s niceſt rule. The whole ſcene exhibits a fund of pleaſures

* This circumſtance, amidſt abundance of other delicate and edifying remarks upon the wonders of nature, is finely touched in the *Philoſophical Tranſactions* recorded in the book of *Job*, chap. xxxviii. ver. 15.— מי פלג לשטף תעלה *Who hath divided a water-courſe for the overflowing of waters?*—The *Hebrew* is ſo pregnant and rich with ſenſe, that no *tranſlation* can do it juſtice. The following *paraphraſe*, perhaps, may repreſent the principal ideas comprehended in the expreſſive original.—Who has *branched out*, and, with admirable judgment, *diſpoſed* a variety of *aqueducts*, for that immenſe collection of waters which float in the ſky? Who *diſtributes* thoſe pendulous floods thro' all the borders of the earth? diſtributes them, not in dreadful cataracts, or *promiſcuous* gluts of rain, but in kindly drops, and refreſhing ſhowers; with as much *regularity* and *œconomy*, as if they were conveyed by *pipes* from a *conduit?*—To WHOM ſhall we aſcribe that niceneſs of contrivance, which now emits, now reſtrains them; ſometimes derives their humid train to one place, ſometimes to another; diſpenſes them to *this* ſoil in larger, to *that* in ſmaller communications; and, in a word, ſo manages the mighty fluid, that every ſpot is *ſupplied*, in exact proportion to its wants; none *deſtroyed* by an undiſtinguiſhing deluge?

† Perhaps it was from ſuch an obſervation, that the *Greeks*, thoſe critical and refined judges of things, expreſſed the *mundane ſyſtem* by a word, which ſignifies *beauty*,—κοσμος.

ſures to the imagination, at the ſame time that it more than ſupplies all our wants *.

Therefore thou art *inexcuſable*, O man, whoſoever thou art, that *rebelleſt* againſt thy Maker. He ſurrounds thee with unnumbered benefits, and follows thee with an effuſion of the richeſt, nobleſt gifts. He courts thy affections, he ſolicits thy gratitude, by liberalities which are never intermitted, by a bounty which knows no limits.—Moſt bleſſed LORD, let this thy goodneſs, thy unwearied goodneſs, lead us to repentance. *Win* us to thyſelf, thou Fountain of felicity, by theſe ſweet inducements. *Draw* us to our duty, thou GOD of our ſalvation, by theſe "cords of love."

WHAT a living picture is here of the *beneficial* effects of *induſtry!* By induſtry and cultivation, this neat ſpot is an image of *Eden*. Here is all that can entertain the eye, or † regale the ſmell. Whereas, without cultivation, this ſweet garden had been a deſolate wilderneſs. Vile thiſtles had made it loathſome, and tangling briers inacceſſible. Without cultivation, it might have been a neſt for ſerpents, and the horrid haunt of venomous creatures. But the ſpade and pruning-knife, in the hand of Induſtry, have improved it into a ſort of terreſtrial paradiſe.

How naturally does this lead our contemplation to the advantages which flow from a virtuous *education*, and the miſeries which enſue from the ‡ *neglect* of it! —The mind, without early inſtruction, will, in all probability,

* "Thoſe ſeveral living creatures, which are made for our "ſervice or ſuſtenance, at the ſame time either fill the woods "with their muſic, furniſh us with game, or raiſe pleaſing "ideas in us by the delightfulneſs of their appearance. Foun-"tains, lakes, and rivers, are as refreſhing to the imagination, "as to the ſoil through which they paſs."

Spect. vol. v. N° 387.

† *Omnis copia narium.* HOR.

‡ *Neglectis urenda filix innaſcitur agris.* HOR.

probability, become like the "vineyard of the slug-"gard." If left to the propensities of its own depraved will, what can we expect, but the most luxuriant growth of unruly appetites, which, in time, will break forth into all manner of scandalous irregularities? What?—but that *anger*, like a prickly thorn, arm the temper with an untractable moroseness; *peevishness*, like a stinging nettle, render the conversation irksome and forbidding; *avarice*, like some choking weed, teach the fingers to gripe, and the hands to oppress; *revenge*, like some poisonous plant, replete with baneful juices, rankle in the breast, and meditate mischief to its neighbour; while unbridled *lusts*, like swarms of noisome insects, taint each rising thought; and render "every imagination of the heart, only evil "continually."—Such are the usual products of savage nature! such the furniture of the uncultivated soul!

Whereas, let the mind be put under the "nurture "and admonition of the LORD;" let holy discipline clear the soil; let sacred instructions sow it with the best seed; let skill and vigilance dress the rising shoots, direct the young ideas how to spread, the wayward passions how to move:—then, what a different state of the inner man will quickly take place! *Charity* will breathe her sweets, and *Hope* expand her blossoms; the *personal* virtues display their graces, and the *social* ones their fruits *; the sentiments become generous, the carriage endearing, the life honourable and useful †.

O!

* This transformation of the *heart*, and renewal of the *life*, are represented, in scripture, by similitudes very nearly allied to the images used above.—GOD, by his sanctifying Spirit, *will make the soul as a watered garden.* Under the operation of this divine principle, *the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.* Where-ever it exerts the refining and ennobling energy, *instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir-tree; and, instead of the brier, the myrtle-tree.* Jer. xxxi. 12. Is. xxxv. 1. & lv. 13.

† — — *A teneris assuescere tanti est!* VIRG.

O! that governors of *families*, and masters of *schools*, would watch, with a conscientious solicitude, over the morals of their tender charge! What pity it is, that the advancing generation should lose these invaluable endowments, through any supineness in their instructors!—See! with what assiduity the *curious florist* attends his little nursery! He visits them early and late; furnishes them with the propereſt mould; supplies them with seasonable moisture; guards them from the ravages of insects; screens them from the injuries of the weather; marks their springing buds; observes them attentively, through their whole progress; and never intermits his anxiety, till he beholds them blown into full perfection.—And shall a range of *painted leaves*, which flourish to-day, and to-morrow fall to the ground;—shall these be tended with more zealous application, than the exalted faculties of an *immortal* soul!

Yet trust not in cultivation *alone*. It is the blessing of the almighty Husbandman which imparts *success* to such labours of love. If GOD "seal up the bottles "of heaven," and command the clouds to with-hold their fatness, the best manured plot becomes a barren desert. And if HE restrain the dew of his heavenly benediction, all human endeavours miscarry; the rational plantation languishes; our most pregnant hopes, from youths of the most promising genius, prove abortive. *Their root will be as rottenness, and their bloſſom will go up as dust* *. Therefore let *parents* plant;

——— η γαρ μικρον διαφερει, το υθως η υθως ευθυς εκ νεου εθιζεσθαι, αλλα παμπολυ, μαλλον δε το παν. ARISTOT. The principles we imbibe, and the habits we contract, in our early years, are not matters of *small moment*, but of the *utmoſt conſequence* imaginable. They not only give a transient or superficial tincture to our *firſt* appearance in life, but most commonly stamp the form of our *whole* future conduct, and even of our *eternal* state.

* Iſ. v. 24.

plant; let *tutors* water; but let both look up to the Father of *ſpirits*, for the deſired increaſe.

On every ſide, I eſpy ſeveral *budding* flowers. As yet they are like bales of cloth from the packer's warehouſe. Each is wrapt within a ſtrong incloſure, and its contents are tied together by the firmeſt bandages; ſo that all their beauties lye concealed, and all their ſweets are locked up.—Juſt ſuch is the *niggardly* wretch, whoſe aims are all turned inward, and meanly terminated upon *himſelf;* who makes his own private intereſts, or perſonal pleaſures, the ſole centre of his deſigns, and the ſcanty circumference of his actions.

Ere long the ſearching beams will open theſe ſilken folds, and draw them into a graceful *expanſion*. Then, what a lovely bluſh will glow in their cheeks, and what a balmy odour exhale from their boſoms!—So, when divine grace ſhines upon the mind, even *the churl becomes bountiful;* the heart of ſtone is taken away; and a heart of fleſh, a heart ſuſceptible of the ſofteſt, moſt compaſſionate emotions, is introduced in its ſtead. O! how ſweetly do the ſocial affections dilate themſelves, under ſo benign an influence! Juſt like theſe diſcloſing gems, under the powerful eye of day. The tender regards are no longer *confined* to a ſingle object; but *extend* themſelves into a generous concern for mankind, and ſhed liberal refreſhments on all within their reach *.

Ariſe

* The prophet, deſcribing the *charitable* temper, very beautifully ſays, *If thou draw out thy ſoul to the hungry!*—This, I think, may not improperly be illuſtrated by the circumſtances obſerved above. The opening of thoſe buds into a large and extenſive ſpread, is a pretty portrait of the *amplitude* of a *generous* heart; which cannot ſhut up its compaſſion, or remain unconcerned at any human calamity. The freeneſs and copiouſneſs, with which the expanded flowers are continually pouring out their choiceſt eſſences, may repreſent the various acts

Ariſe then, thou Sun of Righteouſneſs? ariſe, with healing under thy wings; and transfuſe thy gentle, but penetrating ray, through all our intellectual powers. Enlarge every *narrow* diſpoſition, and fill us with a *diffuſive* benevolence. Make room in our breaſts for the whole human race; and teach us to love all our fellow-creatures, for their amiable Creator's ſake. May we be pleaſed with their excellencies, and rejoice in their happineſs; but feel their miſeries as our own, and, with a brother's ſympathy, haſten to relieve them!

DISPOSED at proper diſtances, I obſerve a range of ſtrong and *ſtately ſtalks*. They ſtand like towers, along the walls of a fortified city; or riſe, like lofty ſpires, amidſt the group of houſes. They part, at the top, into ſeveral penſile ſpiky pods; from each of which we ſhall ſoon ſee a fine figure diſplaying itſelf; *rounded* into a form, which conſtitutes a perfect circle; *ſpread* wide open, into the moſt frank and communicative air; and tinged with the colour, which is ſo peculiarly captivating to the miſer's eye.

But the property I chiefly admire, is its paſſionate *fondneſs* for the *ſun*. When the evening-ſhades take place, the poor flower droops, and folds up its leaves. It mourns all the long night, and pines amidſt the gloom, like ſome forlorn lover, baniſhed from the object of his affections. No ſooner does Providence open "the eyelids of the morning," but it meets * and welcomes the returning light; courts and careſſes it, all the day; nor ever loſes ſight of the refulgent charmer,

of an unwearied liberality; together with thoſe endearing words, and that cordial affection, which *embalm*, as it were, a gift, double its value; and conſtitute what the ſacred penman ſtyles, *drawing out the ſoul.* תמוך נפשך *deprompſeris animam tuam.* Iſ. lviii. 10.

* — *Illa ſuum, quamvis radice tenetur,*
Vertitur ad ſolem. OVID.

charmer, ſo long as he continues above the horizon. —In the morning, you may perceive it preſenting a golden boſom to the eaſt; at noon, it points upward to the middle ſky; in the evening follows the ſame attractive influence to the weſt.

Surely, Nature is a book, and every page rich with ſacred hints. To an attentive mind, the *garden* turns *preacher*, and its blooming tenants are ſo many lively ſermons. What an engaging pattern, and what an excellent leſſon, have we here!—*So*, let the redeemed of the LORD *look unto* JESUS *, and be conformed to their Beloved. Let us all be *heliotropes* (if I may uſe the expreſſion) to the *Sun of Righteouſneſs*. Let our paſſions riſe and fall; take this courſe or that; as his word determines, as his holy example guides. Let us be ſo accommodated, both to his commanding and providential will, as the wax is turned to the imprinted ſeal; or as the aſpect of this enamoured flower, to the ſplendid ſtar, which creates our day.

In every *enjoyment*, O thou watchful Chriſtian, look unto JESUS; receive it as proceeding from his love, and purchaſed by his agonies †.—In every *tribulation* look unto JESUS; mark his gracious hand, managing the ſcourge, or mingling the bitter cup; attempering it to a proper degree of ſeverity; adjuſting the time of its continuance; and ready to make theſe ſeeming diſaſters productive of real good.—In every infirmity and *failing*, look unto JESUS, thy merciful High Prieſt, pleading his atoning blood, and making interceſſion for tranſgreſſors.—In every *prayer* look unto JESUS, thy prevailing Advocate, recommending thy devotions, and "bearing the iniquity of thy holy "things ‡."—In every *temptation* look unto JESUS, the

* Heb. xii. 2.

† He ſunk beneath our heavy woes,
To raiſe us to his throne:
There's not a gift his hand beſtows,
But coſt his heart a groan. WATTS.

‡ Exod. xxviii. 38.

the Author of thy ſtrength, and Captain of thy ſalvation; who alone is able to lift up the hands which hang down, to invigorate the enfeebled knees, and make thee more than conqueror over all thy enemies.—But eſpecially, when the *hour* of thy *departure* approaches; when "thy fleſh and thy heart fail;" when all the ſprings of life are irreparably breaking; *then* look unto JESUS with a believing eye *. Like expiring *Stephen*, behold him ſtanding at the right hand of GOD, on purpoſe to ſuccour his people, in this their laſt extremity. Yes, my Chriſtian friend, when thy journey through life is finiſhed, and thou art arrived on the very verge of mortality; when thou art juſt launching out into the inviſible world, and all before thee is vaſt eternity; then, O then, be ſure to look ſtedfaſtly unto JESUS! "See by faith the "LORD'S CHRIST." View him as the only *Way* † to the everlaſting manſions; as the only *Door* ‡ to the abodes of bliſs.

YONDER tree, which faces the ſouth, has ſomething too remarkable to paſs without obſervation.—Like the fruitful, though feeble vine, ſhe brings forth a large family of branches; but, unable to ſupport them herſelf, commits them to the tuition of a ſunny wall. As yet the tender twigs have ſcarce gemmed their future bloſſoms. However, I may anticipate the well-known productions, and picture to myſelf the *paſſion-flower;* which will, in due time, with a long and copious ſucceſſion, adorn the boughs.

I have read, in a *Latin* author, of flowers inſcribed with the names of kings ‖: but here is one emblazoned with the marks of the bleeding Prince of life. I read, in

* *Look unto ME, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth.* Iſ. xlv. 22.

† John xiv. 6. ‡ John x. 9.

‖ *Die, quibus in terris inſcripti nomina regum*
Naſcanter flores?— VIRG.

in the inſpired writings, of apoſtolic men, who bore about in their bodies, the dying of the LORD JESUS*: but here is a *blooming religioſo*, that carries apparent memorials of the ſame tremendous and fatal cataſtrophe.—Who would have expected to find ſuch a tragedy of wo exhibited in a collection of the moſt delicate delights? or to ſee *Cavalry*'s horrid ſcene pourtrayed on the ſofteſt ornaments of the garden? —Is nature then actuated by the noble ambition of paying *commemorative* honours to her agonizing Sovereign? Is ſhe kindly officious to *remind* forgetful mortals of that miracle of mercy, which it is their duty to contemplate, and their happineſs to believe? —Or is a *ſportive* imagination my interpreter; and all the ſuppoſed reſemblance no more than the precarious gloſs of fancy? Be it ſo: yet even fancy has her merit, when ſhe ſets forth, in ſuch pleaſing imagery, the crucified JESUS. Nor ſhall I refuſe a willing regard to Imagination herſelf, when ſhe employs her creative powers to revive the ſenſe of ſuch unparalleled love, and prompt my gratitude to ſo divine a friend.

That *ſpiral tendril*, ariſing from the bottom of the ſtalk, is it a repreſentation of the *ſcourge*, which laſhed the Redeemer's unſpotted fleſh; and inflicted thoſe ſtripes, by which our ſouls are healed? or, is it twiſted for the *cord*, which bound his hands in painful and ignominious confinement; thoſe beneficent hands, which were inceſſantly ſtretched out to unlooſe the heavy burdens, and to impart bleſſings of every choice kind? Behold the *nails*, which were drenched in his ſacred veins, and rivetted his feet to the accurſed tree; thoſe beautiful† feet, which always went about doing good; and travelled far and near, to ſpread the glad tidings of everlaſting ſalvation. See the *hammer*, ponderous and maſſy, which drove the rugged irons through the ſhivering

* 2 Cor. iv. 10.

† *How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publiſheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publiſheth ſalvation!* Iſ. lii. 7.

ſhivering nerves; and forced a paſſage for thoſe dreadful wedges, between the diſlocated bones.—View the *thorns*, which encircled our Royal Maſter's brow, and ſhot their keen afflictive points into his bleſſed head. O the ſmart! the racking ſmart! when, inſtead of the triumphal laurel, or the odoriferous garland, that pungent and ragged wreath was planted on the meek Meſſiah's forehead! When violent and barbarous blows of the ſtrong eaſtern cane *, ſtruck the prickly crown, and fixed every thorn deep in his throbbing temples ‡! —There ſtand the *diſciples*, ranged in the green impalement, and forming a circle round the inſtruments of their great Commander's death. They appear like ſo many faithful adherents, who breathe a gallant reſolution, either of defending their LORD to the laſt extremity, or of dropping honourably by his ſide. But did they give ſuch proofs of zeal and fidelity in their conduct, as their ſteady poſture, and determined aſpect, ſeem to promiſe? Alas! what is all human firmneſs, when

* *They took the reed*, ſays the ſacred hiſtorian, *and ſmote him on the head;* "and ſo, as it were, nailed down the thorns "into his forehead and temples, and occaſioned thereby ex- "quiſite pain, as well as a great effuſion of blood." *Family-expoſitor*, vol. II. ſect. 188.—"It is moſt probable," adds the ſame judicious critic, "this was a walking-ſtaff, which they "put into his hand as a ſceptre; for a *blow* with a *ſlight reed* "would ſcarce have been felt, or have deſerved a mention in "a detail of ſuch dreadful ſufferings."

‡ The ſmart attending this unparalleled piece of contempt and barbarity, muſt be *inexpreſſibly ſevere;* not only on account of the many painful punctures made in the fleſh, but principally, becauſe the *perioſteum*, an exquiſitely ſenſible tegument of the bones, lying, in thoſe parts, very near the external ſkin, muſt receive a *multitude* of terrible wounds. The anguiſh of which could not fail of being inflamed to an exceſs of rage, by the *continuance* of ſo many thorny lancets in that extremely tender membrane; which, in ſuch a caſe,

—tremblingly alive all o'er,
Muſt ſmart and agonize at ev'ry pore.

when deſtitute of ſuccours from above, but an expiring *vapour?* What is every ſaint, if unſupported by powerful grace, but an abandoned *traitor?*—Obſerve the *glory*, delineated in double rays, grand with imperial purple, and rich with æthereal blue. But ah! how incapable are threads, tho' ſpun by ſummer's fineſt hand, tho' dyed in ſnows or dipped in heaven, to diſplay the immaculate excellency of his human, or the ineffable majeſty of his divine nature! Compared with theſe ſublime perfections, the moſt *vivid* aſſemblage of colours fades into an *unmeaning* flatneſs; the moſt charming effects of light and ſhade are not only mere daubings, but an abſolute blank.

Among all the beauties which ſhine in ſunny robes, and ſip the ſilver dews, this, I think, has the *nobleſt import*, if not the *fineſt preſence*. Were they all to paſs in review, and expect the award of ſuperiority from my deciſion, I ſhould not heſitate a moment. Be the prize aſſigned to this amiable candidate, which has ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed, and ſo highly dignified herſelf, by bearing ſuch a remarkable reſemblance to "the "righteous Branch; the Plant of Renown *." While others appoint it a place in the parterre, I would tranſplant the paſſion-flower, or rather tranſfer its ſacred ſignificancy, to my heart. *There* let it bloom, both in ſummer and in winter; bloom, in the moſt impreſſive characters, and with an undecaying luſtre: that I alſo may wear,—wear on my very ſoul, the traces of IMMANUEL, pierced for my ſins, and bruiſed for my tranſgreſſions: that I alſo may *be crucified with* CHRIST §, at leaſt in penitential remorſe, and affectionate ſympathy: that I may *know the fellowſhip of his ſufferings* ‖; and feel all my evil affections, wounded by his agonies, mortified by his death.

THERE is another ſubject of the verdant kingdom which,

* So the bleſſed JESUS is deſcribed, *Jer.* xxiii. 5. *Ezek.* xxxiv. 29. § Gal. ii. 20. ‖ Phil. iii. 10.

which, on account of its very uncommon qualities, demands my particular notice: one, so extremely diffident in her disposition, and delicate in her constitution, that she dares not venture herself abroad in the open air, but is nursed up in the warmth of a *hot-bed*, and lives cloistered in the cells of a *green-house*. But the most curious peculiarity is, that, of all her kindred-species, she alone partakes of *perceptive* life; at least advances nearest to this more exalted state of being, and may be looked upon as the link which connects the animal and the vegetable world. A stranger, observing her motions, would almost be induced to suspect, that she is endued with some inferior degrees of consciousness and caution. For, if you offer to handle this *sensitive plant*, she immediately takes an alarm; hastily contracts her fibres; and, like a person under apprehensions of violence, *withdraws* from your finger, in a kind of precipitate *disorder*. Perhaps, the beauty of her aspect might be sullied, or the niceness of her texture discomposed, by the human touch. Therefore, like a coy virgin, she recedes from all unbecoming familiarities, and will admit no such improper, if not pernicious, freedoms.

Whatever be the cause of this unusual effect, it suggests an instructive admonition to the Christian. *Such* should be our apprehensive timorous care, with regard to sin, and all, even the most distant, approaches of vice. *So* should we avoid the very appearance of evil, and stand aloof from every occasion of falling.—If sinners entice, if forbidden pleasures tempt, or if opportunity beckon, with the gain of injustice in her hand; O! turn from the gilded snare; touch not the beauteous bane; but fly, fly with haste, fly without any delay, from the bewitching ruin.—Does *Anger* draw near with her lighted torch, to kindle the flame of resentment in our breasts? does *Flattery* ply our ears, with her inchanting and intoxicating whispers? would *Discontent* lay her leaden hand upon our temper, and mould

mould into our minds her ſour leaven, in order to make us a burden to ourſelves, and unamiable to others? Inſtantly let us divert our attention from the dangerous objects; and not ſo much endeavour to *antidote*, as to *ſhun*, the moral contagion. Let us revolve in our meditations, that wonderful *meekneſs* of our diſtreſſed Maſter, which, amidſt the moſt abuſive and provoking inſults, maintained an uniform tenor of unſhaken ſerenity. Let us contemplate that prodigious *humiliation*, which brought him, from an infinite height above all worlds, to make his bed in the duſt of death. Let us ſoothe our jarring, our uneaſy paſſions, with the remembrance of that *chearfulneſs* and *reſignation*, which rendered him, in the deepeſt poverty, unfeignedly thankful; and, under the heavieſt tribulations, moſt ſubmiſſively patient.

Harbour not, on any conſideration, the betrayer of your virtue. Be deaf, inflexibly deaf, to every beguiling ſolicitation. If it obtrude into the unguarded heart, give it entertainment, no, not for a moment. To parley with the enemy, is to open a door for deſtruction. Our ſafety conſiſts in flight: and, in this caſe, *ſuſpicion* is the trueſt *prudence; fear*, the greateſt *bravery*.—Play not on the brink of the precipice. Flutter not round the edges of the flame. Dally not with the ſtings of death. But reject, with a becoming mixture of ſolicitude and abhorrence, the very firſt inſinuations of iniquity; as cautiouſly, as the *ſmarting ſore* ſhrinks even from the ſofteſt hand; as conſtantly, as this *jealous plant* recoils at the approaching touch *.

NOT

* The prophet *Iſaiah*, in an elegant and lively deſcription of the *upright man*, ſays, *He ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes;* and, I may add, from practiſing any kind of iniquity. The image, exceedingly beautiful, and equally expreſſive, both illuſtrates and enforces the doctrine of this whole ſection.—*Shaketh his hands;* juſt as a perſon would do, who

NOT long ago, these curious productions of the spring were *coarse* and mis-shapen *roots*. Had we opened the earth, and beheld them in their seed, how uncouth and contemptible had their appearance been! —But now they are the boast of nature, the delight of the sons of men, finished patterns for enamelling and embroidery, outshining even the happiest strokes of the pencil. They are taught to bloom, but with a very inferior lustre §, in the richest tapestries, and most magnificent silks. Art never attempts to *equal* their incomparable elegancies; but places all her merit, in *copying* after these delicate originals. Even those who glitter in silver, or whose cloathing is of wrought gold, are desirous to borrow additional ornaments, from a sprig of jessamine, or a little assemblage of pinks.

What a fine idea may we form, from hence, of the *resurrection*

happens to have *burning coals* fall into his lap, or some *venomous creature* fastening upon his flesh. In such a case, none would stand a moment to consider, or to debate with himself the expediency of the thing. He would instantly fling off the pernicious incumbrance; instantly endeavour to disengage himself from the clinging mischief.—*Isa.* xxxiii. 15.

I have represented the danger of not extinguishing immediately the *very first* sparks of temptation, in a variety of views. Because a proper behaviour, in this conjuncture, is of such vast importance to the purity, the safety, and the comfort of our minds.—Because I had the *royal moralist* in my eye; who, deterring his pupils from the path of the wicked, cries, with an air of deep concern, and in the language of vehement importunity, cries; *Avoid it; pass not by it; turn from it; and pass away.* How strongly is the counsel urged, by being so *frequently* repeated; in such a remarkable *diversity* of concise and abrupt, consequently of forcible and pressing admonitions! *Prov.* iv. 15.

§ The cowslip smiles in *brighter yellow* dress,
Than that which veil's the nubil virgin's breast:
A *fairer red* stands blushing in the rose,
Than that which on the bridegroom's vestments flows.
PRIOR's *Sol.*

reſurrection of the *juſt*, and the ſtate of their re-animated bodies! As the roots even of our choiceſt flowers, when depoſited in the ground, are rude and ungraceful; but, when they ſpring up into blooming life, are moſt elegant and ſplendid; ſo the fleſh of a ſaint, when committed to the duſt, alas! what is it? A heap of corruption; a maſs of putrefying clay. But, when it obeys the great archangel's call, and ſtarts into a new exiſtence; what an aſtoniſhing change enſues! what a moſt ennobling improvement takes place!—That which was ſown in *weakneſs*, is raiſed in all the vivacity of *power*. That which was ſown in *deformity*, is raiſed in the bloom of celeſtial *beauty*. Exalted, refined, and glorified, it will ſhine "as the brightneſs of the firmament," when it darts the inimitable blue thro' the fleeces—the ſnowy fleeces of ſome cleaving cloud.

Fear not, then, thou faithful Chriſtian; fear not, at the appointed time, to deſcend into the tomb. Thy *ſoul* thou mayſt truſt with thy omnipotent Redeemer, who is LORD of the unſeen world; "who has the "keys of hell, and of death." Moſt ſafely mayſt thou truſt thy better part, in thoſe beneficent hands, which were pierced with nails, and faſtened to the ignominious tree, for thy ſalvation.—With regard to thy *earthly tabernacle*, be not diſmayed. It is taken down, only to be rebuilt upon a diviner plan, and in a more heavenly form. If it retires into the ſhadow of death, and lyes immured in the gloom of the grave; it is only to return, from a ſhort confinement, to endleſs liberty. If it falls into diſſolution, it is in order to riſe more illuſtrious from its ruins; and wear an infinitely brighter face of perfection, and of glory *.

HAVING

* The wiſe, the juſt, the pious, and the brave,
Live in their deaths, and flouriſh from the grave.
Grain hid in earth repays the peaſant's care,
And ev'ning-ſuns but ſet to riſe more fair.

HAVING now made my *panegyric*, let me next take up a *lamentation*, for theſe lovelieſt productions of the vegetable world.—For I foreſee their approaching doom. Yet a little while, and all theſe pleaſing ſcenes vaniſh. Yet a little while, and all the ſweets of the breathing, all the beauties of the blooming ſpring, are no more. Every one of theſe amiable forms muſt be ſhrivelled to deformity, and trodden to the earth. —Significant reſemblance this of all created beauty. *All fleſh is graſs;* like the green herbage, liable and prone to fade. Nay, *all the goodlineſs thereof*, its fineſt accompliſhments, and what the world univerſally admires, *is as the flower of the field* *, which loſes its gloſs, decays and periſhes, more ſpeedily than the graſs itſelf.—Behold then, ye brighteſt among the daughters of *Eve;* behold yourſelves, in this glaſs. See the charms of your *perſon* eclipſed, by the luſtre of theſe little flowers; and the frailty of your *ſtate* repreſented †, by their tranſient glories. A fever may ſcorch

* Iſa. xl. 6.

† Και το ροδον καλον εστι, και ο χρονος αυτο μαραινει·
Και το ιον καλον εστιν εν ηιαρι, και ταχυ γηρᾳ·
Λευκον το κρινον εστι, μαραινηται ανικα πιπτῃ·
Α δε χιων λευκα, και τακεται ανικα παχθῃ·
Και καλλος καλον ηστι το παιδικον, αλλ' ολιγον ζῃ.

The reader will excuſe me, if I *imitate*, rather than *tranſlate*, theſe lines from *Theocritus;* If I vary one image, add another, and give a new turn to the whole.

When ſnows deſcend and robe the fields
In *winter*'s bright array;
Touch'd by the ſun, the luſtre fades,
And weeps itſelf away.

When *ſpring* appears; when violets blow,
And ſhed a rich perfume;
How ſoon the fragrance breaths its laſt!
How ſhort-liv'd is the bloom!

Freſh in the morn, the *ſummer*-roſe
Hangs with'ring ere 'tis noon;
We ſcarce enjoy the balmy gift,
But mourn the pleaſure gone.

With

ſcorch thoſe poliſhed veins; a conſumption may emaciate the dimpling cheeks; and a load of unexpected ſorrows depreſs thoſe lively ſpirits. Or ſhould theſe diſaſters, in pity, ſpare the tender frame; yet age, inexorable age and wrinkles, will aſſuredly come at laſt; will wither all the fine features, and blaſt every ſprightly grace.

Then, ye *fair*, when thoſe ſparkling eyes are darkened, and ſink in their orbs; when they are rolling in agonies, or ſwimming in death; how will you ſuſtain the affliction? how will you repair the loſs?—Apply your thoughts to *religion*. Attend to the *one thing needful*. Believe in, and imitate, the bleſſed JESUS. Then ſhall your ſouls mount up to the realms of happineſs, when the well-proportioned clay is mingling with its mean original. The light of GOD's countenance will irradiate, with matchleſs and conſummate perfection, all their exalted faculties. Cleanſed entirely from every dreg of corruption, like ſome unſullied mirror, they will reflect the complete image of their Creator's holineſs.—O! that you would thus *dreſs* your *minds*, and prepare for the immortal ſtate! Then, from ſhining among your fellow-creatures on earth, you ſhall be tranſlated, to ſhine around the throne of GOD. Then, from being the ſweeteners of our life, and the delight of our eyes here below; you ſhall

With gliding fire, an evening-ſtar
  Streaks the *autumnal* ſkies;
Shook from the ſphere, it darts away,
  And, in an inſtant, dies.

Such are the charms that flaſh the cheek,
  And ſparkle in the eye:
So, from the lovely finiſh'd form
  The tranſient graces fly.

To this the *ſeaſons*, as they roll,
  Their atteſtation bring:
They warn the fair; their ev'ry round
  Confirms the truth I ſing.

ſhall paſs, by an eaſy tranſition, into angels of light; and become "an everlaſting excellency, the joy of "all generations."

YES; ye flowery nations, ye muſt all decay.—Yonder *lily*, that looks like the queen of the gay creation,—ſee, how gracefully it erects its majeſtic head! What an air of dignity and grandeur ennobles its aſpect! For elevated mien, as well as for incomparable luſtre, juſtly may it be preferred to the magnificent monarch of the Eaſt *. But, all ſtately and charming as it is, it will hardly ſurvive a few more days. That unſpotted whiteneſs muſt quickly be tarniſhed, and the ſnowy form defiled in the duſt.

As the lily pleaſes, with the noble ſimplicity of its appearance; the *tulip* is admired, for the gaiety and multiplicity of its colours. Never was cup either painted or enamelled with ſuch a profuſion of dyes. Its tinges are ſo glowing, its contraſts ſo ſtrong, and the arrangement of them both ſo elegant and artful! —'Twas lately the pride of the border, and the reigning beauty of the delightful ſeaſon; as exquiſitely fine as the rainbow, and almoſt as extremely tranſient. It ſpread, for a little moment, its glittering plumage; but has, now, laid all its variegated and ſuperior honours down. Thoſe radiant ſtripes are blended, alas! rudely blended with common mould.

To a graceful ſhape, and blooming complexion, the *roſe* adds a moſt agreeable perfume. Our noſtrils make it repeated viſits, and are never weary of drinking in its ſweets. A fragrance, ſo peculiarly rich and reviving, tranſpires from its opening tufts, that every one covets its acquaintance. How have I ſeen even the accompliſhed *Clariſſa*, for whom ſo many votaries languiſh, fondly careſſing this little flower! That lovely boſom, which is the ſeat of innocence and virtue; whoſe leaſt excellency it is, to rival the delicacy of the pureſt

* Matth. vi. 29.

pureſt ſnows; among a thouſand charms of its own, thinks it poſſible to adopt another from the damaſk roſe-bud. Yet even this univerſal favourite muſt fail. Its native balm cannot preſerve it from putrefaction. Soon, ſoon muſt it reſign all thoſe endearing qualities; and hang neglected on its ſtem, or drop deſpiſed to the ground.

One could wiſh, methinks, theſe moſt amiable of the inanimate race, a longer exiſtence: but in vain. They *fade* almoſt as ſoon as they *flouriſh*. Within leſs than a month their glories are extinct. Let the ſun take a few more journeys through the ſky; then viſit this enchanting walk; and you will find nothing but a wretched wilderneſs of ragged or naked ſtalks.—But (my ſoul exults in the thought) the *garment* of celeſtial *glory*, which ſhall ere long array the re-animated body, will never wax old. The illuſtrious *robes* of a Saviour's conſummate *righteouſneſs*, which even now adorn the juſtified ſpirit, are incorruptible and immortal. No moth can corrode their texture; no number of ages ſully their brightneſs. The light of day may be quenched, and all the ſtars ſink in obſcurity; but the honours of "juſt men made perfect" are ſubject to no diminution. Inextinguiſhable and unfading is the luſtre of their crown.

YES; ye flowery nations, ye muſt all decay.—Winter, like ſome enraged and irreſiſtible conqueror, that carries fire and ſword where-ever he advances; that demoliſhes towns; depopulates countries; ſpreads ſlaughter and deſolation on every ſide;—ſo, juſt ſo, will *Winter*, with his ſavage and unrelenting blaſts, invade this beautiful proſpect. The ſtorms are gathering, and the tempeſts muſtering their rage, to fall upon the vegetable kingdoms. They will ravage thro' the dominions of nature; and plunder her *riches*, and lay waſte her *charms*.—Then, ye trees, muſt you ſtand ſtript of your verdant apparel; and, ye fields,

be ſpoiled of your waving treaſures. Then, the earth, diſrobed of all her gay attire, muſt ſit in ſables, like a diſconſolate widow. The ſun too, who now rides in triumph round the world, and ſcatters gaiety from his radiant eye, will then look faintly from the windows of the ſouth; and, caſting a ſhort glance on our dejected world, will leave us to the uncomfortable gloom of tedious nights.—Then, theſe pretty *choriſters* of the *air* will chant no more to the gentle gales; the lark, the linnet, and all the feathered ſongſters, abandon their notes, and indulge their woes. The harmony of the woods is at an end; and ſilence, (unleſs it be interrupted by howling winds,) a ſullen ſilence, ſits brooding upon the boughs; which are now made vocal, by a thouſand warbling throats.

But (ſweet recollection! raviſhing expectation!) the *ſongs* of *ſaints* in light never admit a pauſe for ſadneſs. All heaven will reſound with the melody of their gratitude; and all eternity echo to their triumphant acclamations. The *Hallelujahs* of that world, and the harmonious joy of its inhabitants, will be as laſting as the divine perfections they celebrate.—Come then, holy love, and *tune* my *heart;* deſcend, celeſtial fire, and *touch* my *tongue;* that I may ſtand ready to ſtrike up, and bear my part, in that great hoſanna, that everlaſting hymn.

YES; yes; ye flowery nations, ye muſt all decay.—And, indeed, could you add the ſtrength of an oak, or the ſtability of a pyramid *, to all the delicacy of your texture; yet ſhort, exceeding ſhort, even then would

* I know not any performance, in which the *tranſitory* nature of theſe moſt *durable* monuments of human grandeur, is hinted with ſuch a modeſt air of inſtruction, or their hideous ruin deſcribed in ſuch a pomp of pleaſing horror, as in a ſmall, but ſolemn, picturesque, and majeſtic poem, entitled—THE RUINS OF ROME, written by the Rev. Mr DYER: whom the

would your duration be. For *I see that all things come to an end.* The pillars of nature are tottering. The foundations of the round world are falling away. "The heavens themselves wax old like a garment."—But, amidst these views of general ruin, here is our refuge; this is our consolation; *We know that our Redeemer liveth.* Thy years, blessed JESUS, shall not fail. From everlasting to everlasting, thou art still the same; the same most excellent and adorable person; the same omnipotent and faithful friend; the same all-sufficient and inestimable portion. O! may we but partake of thy merits; be sanctified by thy grace; and received into thy glory!—Then perish, if ye will, all inferior delights. Let all that is *splendid* in the skies expire; and all that is *amiable* in nature be expunged. Let the whole extent of creation be turned again into one undistinguishable void, one universal blank.—Yet, if GOD be ours, we shall have *enough.* If GOD be ours, we shall have *all*, and abound *; all that our circumstances can want, or our wishes crave, to make us inconceivably blessed and happy; blessed and happy, not only thro' this little interval of time, but thro' the unmeasurable revolutions of eternity.

THE

the reader (if he has the pleasure of perusing that beautiful piece) will easily perceive to have taken his draughts from the *originals* themselves; as nothing but the *sight* of those magnificent remains, could have inspired his lines with such vivacity.—As a specimen of the work, and a confirmation of the remark suggested above, I take leave to transcribe the following passage:

——*The pilgrim oft,*
At dead of night, mid his oraison hears
Aghast the voice of time, disparting tow'rs,
Tumbling all precipitate down dash'd,
Rattling around, loud thund'ring to the moon.
* His hand the good man fastens on the skies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels the idle whirl.

Night-Thoughts, N° IV.

THE *ſun* is now come forth in his ſtrength, and beats fiercely upon my throbbing pulſe.—Let me retire to yonder inviting *arbour*. There the woodbines retain the lucid drop; there the jeſſamines, which line the verdant alcove, are ſtill impearled, and deliciouſly wet with dews.—Welcome, ye *refreſhing ſhades!* I feel, I feel, your chearing influence. My languid ſpirits revive; the ſlackened ſinews are new-ſtrung; and life bounds briſker thro' all her crimſon channels.

Reclined on this moſſy couch, and ſurrounded by this fragrant coldneſs, let me renew my aſpirations to the ever-preſent Deity. Here let me remember, and imitate, the pious *Auguſtine*, and his mother *Monica;* who, being engaged in diſcourſe on the beauties of the viſible creation, roſe, by theſe ladders, to the glories of the inviſible ſtate; till they were inſpired with the moſt *affecting ſenſe* of their ſupereminent excellency, and actuated with the moſt *ardent breathings* after their full enjoyment: inſomuch that they were almoſt rapt up into the bliſs they contemplated; and ſcarce "knew, "whether they were in the body, or out of the body."

WHEN *tempeſts* toſs the ocean; when plaintive ſignals of diſtreſs are heard from the bellowing deep; and melancholy tokens of ſhipwreck come floating on the foaming ſurge; then how delightful to ſtand ſafe on ſhore, and hug one's ſelf in conſcious ſecurity *!—When a *glut* of *waters* burſts from ſome mighty torrent, ruſhes headlong over all the neighbouring plains, ſweeps away the helpleſs cattle, and drives the affrighted ſhepherd from his hut; then from the top of a diſtant eminence,

* As *Lucretius* gave the hint for theſe obſervations, ſo he aſſigns the reaſon of the pleaſure ſpecified. It ariſes, not from the conſiderations of *another's miſery;* this would argue the rankeſt malevolence: but from the agreeable contemplation of our *own* perſona *ſafety;* which, while we view circumſtances that are pernicious to others, but harmleſs to ourſelves, is not a little heightened by the contraſt. *Suave mari magno,* &c.

eminence, to descry the danger we need not fear; how pleasing!—Such, methinks, is my *present situation*. For now the sun blazes from on high: the air glows with his fire: the fields are rent with chinks; the roads are scorched to dust: the woods seem to contract a sickly aspect, and a russet hue: the traveller, broiled as he rides, hastens to his inn, and intermits his journey: the labourer, bathed in sweat, drops the sithe, and desists from his work: the cattle flee to some shady covert, or else pant and toss under the burning noon. Even the stubborn rock, smit with the piercing beams, is ready to cleave. All things *languish* beneath the dazzling deluge.—While I shall enjoy a *cool* hour, and *calm* reflection, amidst the gloom of this bowery recess, which scarce admits one speck of sunshine.

Thus, may both the flock, and their shepherd, *dwell beneath the defence of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty* *. Then, tho' † the *pestilence* walketh in darkness, and the *sickness* destroyeth at noon-day; though thousands fall beside us, and ten thousands at our right hand; we need fear no evil. Either the destroying angel shall pass over our houses; or else he shall dispense the corrections of a friend, not the scourges of an enemy; which, instead of hurting us, shall work for our good.—Then, though *profaneness* and *infidelity*, far more malignant evils, breathe deadly contagion, and taint the morals of multitudes around us; yet, if the great Father of spirits "hide "us in the hollow of his hand," we shall hold fast our integrity, and be faithful unto death.

Let then, dearest LORD, O! let thy servant, and the people committed to his care, be received into thy protection, Let us take sanctuary under that *Tree of Life*, erected in thy ignominious cross. Let us fly for safety to

* Psal. xci. 1.

† This was written, when a very infectious and mortal distemper raged in the neighbourhood.

to that *City* of *Refuge*, opened in thy bleeding wounds. Theſe ſhall be a ſacred hiding-place, not to be pierced by the flames of divine wrath, or the fiery darts of temptation. Thy dying merits, and perfect obedience, ſhall be to our ſouls, *as rivers of water in a dry place*, or *as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land* *.

BUT moſt of all, in that *laſt tremendous* day, when the heavens are rent aſunder, and wrapped up like a ſcroll; when thy almighty arm ſhall arreſt the ſun in his career, and daſh to pieces the ſtructure of the univerſe; when the dead, both ſmall and great, ſhall be gathered before the throne of thy glory; and the fates of all mankind hang on the very point of a final irreverſible deciſion:—then, bleſſed JESUS, let us be owned by thee, and we ſhall not be *aſhamed;* defended by thee, and we ſhall not be *afraid*. O! may we, at that awful, that unutterably important juncture, be covered with the wings of thy redeeming love, and we ſhall behold all the horrible convulſions of expiring nature, with compoſure, with comfort! We ſhall even welcome the diſſolution of all things, as the *times of refreſhing from the preſence of the* LORD †.

THERE are, I perceive, who ſtill attend the flowers; and, in defiance of the ſun, ply their work on every expanded bloſſom. The *bees* I mean; that nation of chymiſts! to whom nature has communicated the rare and valuable ſecret, of enriching themſelves, without impoveriſhing others; who extract the moſt delicious ſyrup from every fragrant herb, without wounding its ſubſtance, or diminiſhing its odours.—I take the more notice of theſe ingenious operators, becauſe I would willingly make them my pattern ‡. While the gay

* Iſ. xxxii. 2.

† Acts iii. 19.

‡— — *Ego apis matinæ*
More modoque
Grata carpentis thyma. HOR.

gay *butterfly* flutters her painted wings, and ſips a little fantaſtic delight, only for the preſent moment; while the gloomy *ſpider*, worſe than idly buſied, is preparing his inſidious nets for deſtruction, or ſucking venom even from the moſt wholeſome plants; this frugal community are wiſely employed in providing for futurity, and collecting a copious ſtock of the moſt balmy treaſures.—And O! might theſe meditations ſink into my ſoul! would the GOD, who ſuggeſted each heavenly thought, vouchſafe to convert it into an *eſtabliſhed principle*, to determine all my inclinations, and regulate my whole conduct! I ſhould, then, gather advantages from the ſame blooming objects, more precious than your golden ſtores, ye induſtrious artiſts. I alſo ſhould go home, laden with the *richeſt ſweets*, and the *nobleſt ſpoils*, though I crop not a leaf, nor call a ſingle flower my own.

HERE I behold, aſſembled in *one view*, almoſt all the various beauties which have been ſeverally entertaining my imagination. The *viſtas*, ſtruck through an ancient wood, or formed by rows of venerable elms; conducting the ſpectator's obſervation to ſome remarkable object; or leading the traveller's footſteps to this delightful ſeat:—The *walls*, enriched with fruit-trees, and faced with a covering of their leafy extenſions; I ſhould rather have ſaid, hung with different pieces of nature's nobleſt tapeſtry:—The *walks*, neatly ſhorn, and lined with verdure; or finely ſmoothed, and coated with gravel:—The *alleys*, arched with ſhades, to embower our noon-tide repoſe; or thrown open, for the free acceſſion of air, to invite us to our evening-recreation:—The decent *edgings* of box, which incloſe, like a plain ſelvage, each beautiful compartment, and its ſplendid figures:—The ſhapely *evergreens*, and *flowering ſhrubs*, which ſtrike the eye, and appear with peculiar dignity, in this diſtant ſituation:—The *baſon*, with its cryſtal fount, floating in the centre, and diffuſing

fusing an agreeable freshness through the whole:—The waters, falling from a remote *cascade*, and gently murmuring, as they flow along the pebbles:—*These*, added to the rest, and all so disposed, that each recommends and endears, each render the *whole* a most sweet ravishing scene of order and variety, of elegance and magnificence.

From so many lovely prospects, clustering upon the sight, it is impossible not to be reminded of *heaven*, that world of bliss, those regions of light, where the Lamb that was slain manifests his beatific presence, and his saints live for evermore.—But O! what pencil can sketch out a draught of that goodly land? What colours, or what style, can express the splendors of IMMANUEL's kingdom! Would some celestial hand draw aside the veil, but for one moment; and permit us to throw a single glance on those divine abodes; how would all sublunary possessions become tarnished in our eyes, and grow flat upon our taste! A glimpse, a transient glimpse of those unutterable beatitudes, would captivate our souls, and engross all their faculties. *Eden* itself, after such a vision, would appear a chearless *desert;* and all earthly charms intolerable *deformity*.

Very *excellent things are spoken of thee, thou city of* GOD *. Volumes have been written, and those by inspired men, to display the wonders of thy perfections. All that is rich and resplendent in the visible creation, has been called in to aid our conceptions, and elevate our ideas. But, indeed, no tongue can utter, no pen can describe, no fancy can imagine, what GOD, of his unbounded munificence, has prepared for them that love him.—Seeing then that all terrestrial things must come to a speedy end; and there remaineth a rest, a blissful and everlasting rest, for the people of GOD; let me never be too fondly attached to any present satisfactions. Weaned from whatever is temporal, may I main-

* Psal. lxxxvii. 2.

I maintain a ſuperior indifference for ſuch tranſitory enjoyments; but long, long earneſtly, for the manſions that are above; the paradiſe, "which the LORD "hath planted, and not man." Thither may I tranſmit the chief of my *converſation;* and from thence expect the whole of my *happineſs*. Be that the ſacred, powerful magnet, which ever influences my heart, ever attracts my affections. *There* are ſuch tranſcendent glories, as eye has not ſeen; *there* are ſuch tranſporting pleaſures, as ear has not heard; *there* is ſuch a fulneſs of joys, as the thought of man cannot conceive.

INTO that conſummate felicity, thoſe eternal fruitions, permit me, Madam, to wiſh you, in due time, an *abundant entrance;* and to aſſure you, that this wiſh is breathed, with the ſame ſincerity and ardor, for my honoured correſpondent, as it is, MADAM, for

Your moſt obedient, &c.

JAMES HERVEY.

A

DESCANT

UPON

CREATION.

With joy, with grief, that healing hand I ſee;
The ſkies *it form'd, and yet it* bled *for me.*
Night-Thoughts, N° IV.

A

DESCANT

UPON

CREATION.

A

DESCANT

UPON

CREATION.

IF the reader pleaſes to look back on page 189, he will find me engaged, by a *promiſſory* note, to ſubjoin a *DESCANT* upon *CREATION*.

To *know the love of* CHRIST; to have ſuch a deep apprehenſion of his unſpeakable kindneſs, as may produce in our hearts an adoring gratitude, and an unfeigned faith; this, according to St *Paul*'s eſtimate, is the higheſt and happieſt attainment in the ſacred ſcience of Chriſtianity §. What follows, is an attempt to aſſiſt the attentive mind, in learning a line or two of that beſt and greateſt leſſon. It introduces the moſt conſpicuous parts of the viſible ſyſtem, as ſo many *prompters* to our dull affections; each ſuggeſting a *hint*, adapted to the important occaſion, and ſuited to its reſpective character.

Can

§ Eph. iii. 19.

Can there be a more powerful incentive to devout *gratitude*, than to conſider the magnificent and delicate ſcenes of the univerſe, with a particular reference to CHRIST, as the Creator?—Every object, viewed in this light, will ſurely adminiſter inceſſant recruits to the languiſhing lamp of divine love. Every production in nature will ſtrike a ſpark into the ſoul; and the whole creation concur to raiſe the ſmoking flax into a flame.

Can any thing impart a ſtronger *joy* to the believer, or more effectually confirm his *faith* in the crucified JESUS, than to behold the heavens declaring his glory, and the firmament ſhewing his handy-work? Surely, it muſt be matter of inexpreſſible conſolation to the poor ſinner, to obſerve the honours of his Redeemer, written with ſun-beams, over all the face of the world.

We delight to read an account of our incarnate JEHOVAH, as he is revealed in the books of *Moſes* and the prophets, as he is diſplayed in the writings of the evangeliſts and apoſtles. Let us alſo endeavour to ſee a ſketch of his perfections, as they ſtand delineated in that ſtately volume, where every *leaf* is a ſpacious plain,—every *line*, a flowing brook,—every *period*, a lofty mountain.

Should any of my readers be unexerciſed in ſuch ſpeculations, I beg leave (in purſuance of my promiſe) to preſent them with a *ſpecimen;* or to offer a clue, which may poſſibly lead their minds into this moſt improving and delightful train of thinking.

Should any be inclined to ſuſpect the ſolidity of the following obſervations, or to condemn them, as the voice of rant, and the lawleſs flight of fancy; I muſt intreat ſuch perſons to recollect, that the grand doctrine, the hinge on which they all turn, is warranted and eſtabliſhed by the unanimous teſtimony of the inſpired penmen; who frequently celebrate IMMANUEL, or CHRIST JESUS, as the great almighty cauſe of all; aſſuring us, that *all things were created by*

by him, and for him; and that in him all things consist *.

On such a subject, what is wonderful, is far from being *extravagant*. To be wonderful, is the inseparable characteristic of GOD and his works; especially of that most distinguished and glorious event of the divine works, REDEMPTION; so glorious, that "all the miracles in *Egypt*, and the marvellous acts in "the field of *Zoan*;" all that the *Jewish* annals have recorded, or the human ear has heard; all dwindle into *trivial events*, are scarce worthy to be *remembered* †, in comparison of this infinitely grand and infinitely gracious transaction.—Kindled, therefore, into pleasing astonishment, by such a survey, let me give full scope to my meditations. Let me pour out my whole soul on the boundless subject; not much regarding the limits, which cold criticism, or colder unbelief, might prescribe.

O YE *angels*, that surround the throne; ye princes of heaven, "that excel in strength," and are clothed with transcendent brightness; He, who placed you in those stations of exalted honour, and dignified your nature with such illustrious endowments; He, whom you all obey, and all adore: HE took not on him the angelic form, but was made flesh, and found in fashion as a man. Like us wretched mortals, He was subject to weariness, pain, and every infirmity, sin only excepted;—that we might, one day, be raised to your sublime abodes; be adopted into your blissful society; and join with your transported choir, in giving glory to HIM that sitteth upon the throne, and to the LAMB for ever and ever ‡

O YE *heavens*, whose azure arches rise immensely high, and stretch unmeasurable wide; stupendous amphitheatre!

* *Col.* i. 16, 17. Before my reader enters upon the following Descant, he is desired to peruse the note, page 188.

† Is. xliii. 18. ‡ Rev. v. 13.

phitheatre! amidſt whoſe vaſt expanſive circuit, orbs of the moſt dreadful grandeur are perpetually running their amazing races: unfathomable depths of æther! where worlds unnumbered float; and, to our limited ſight, worlds unnumbered are loſt:—He, who adjuſted your dimenſions with his ſpan, and formed the magnificent ſtructure with his word; HE was once wrapt in ſwaddling-cloaths, and laid in a manger:—that the benefits accruing to his people, through his moſt meritorious humiliation, might have no other meaſure of their value than immenſity; might run parallel, in their duration, with eternity.

Ye *ſtars*, that beam with inextinguiſhable brilliancy, through the midnight-ſky; oceans of flame, and centres of worlds, though ſeemingly little points of light!—He, who ſhone, with eſſential effulgence, innumerable ages, before your twinkling tapers were kindled; and will ſhine with everlaſting majeſty and beauty, when your places in the firmament ſhall be known no more: HE was involved, for many years, in the deepeſt obſcurity; lay concealed in the contemptible city *Nazareth;* lay diſguiſed under the mean habit of a carpenter's ſon:—that he might plant the heavens *, as it were, with new conſtellations; and array theſe clods of earth, theſe houſes of clay, with a radiancy far ſuperior to yours; a radiancy, which will adorn the very heaven of heavens, when you ſhall vaniſh away like ſmoke †; or expire as momentary ſparks from the ſmitten ſteel.

COMETS,

* Iſ. li. 16.

† Alluding to a paſſage in *Iſaiah*, which is, I think, grand and elevated beyond all compariſon.—*Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens ſhall vaniſh away like ſmoke, and the earth ſhall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein ſhall die* like the feeble inſect: *but my righteouſneſs ſhall be for ever, and my ſalvation ſhall not be aboliſhed*, Iſ. li. 6.—With the great *Vitringa*, I tranſlate

COMETS, that ſometimes ſhoot into the illimitable tracts of æther, farther than the diſcernment of our eye is able to follow; ſometimes return from the long, long excurſion, and ſweep our affrighted hemiſphere with your enormous fiery train; that ſometimes make near approaches to the ſun, and burn almoſt in his immediate beams; ſometimes retire to the remoteſt diſtance, and freeze, for ages, in the exceſſive rigours of winter:—He, who, at his ſovereign pleaſure, withdraws the blazing wonder; or leads forth the portentous ſtranger, to ſhake terror over guilty kingdoms; HE was overwhelmed with the moſt ſhocking amazement, and plunged into the deepeſt anxiety; was chilled with apprehenſions of fear, and ſcorched by the flames of avenging wrath:—that I, and other depraved rebellious creatures, might not be eternally agitated with the extremes of jarring paſſions; oppoſite, yet, on either ſide, tormenting; far more tormenting to the ſoul, than the ſevereſt degrees of your heat and cold to the human ſenſe.

YE *Planets*, that, winged with unimaginable ſpeed, traverſe the regions of the ſky; ſometimes climbing millions and millions of miles above, ſometimes deſcending as far below, the great axle of your motions: ye, that are ſo minutely faithful to the viciſſitudes of day and night; ſo exactly punctual in bringing on the changes of your reſpective ſeaſons:—He, who launched you, at firſt, from his mighty arm; who continually impels you with ſuch wonderful rapidity, and guides you with ſuch perfect regularity; who fixes "the "habitation of his holineſs, and his glory," infinite heights above your ſcanty rounds: HE once became a helpleſs infant, ſojourned in our inferior world, fled from

late the words כז כמו not, *in like manner;* but, *like the feeble inſect.* Which renders the period more complete; the ſenſe more emphatical; and is more agreeable to the genius of the ſacred original.

from the perſecutor's ſword, and wandered as a ſtranger in a foreign land :—that he might lead our feet into the way of peace ; that he might bring us aliens near to GOD, bring us exiles home to heaven.

THOU *Sun*, inexhauſted ſource of light, and heat, and comfort ! without whoſe preſence an univerſal gloom would enſue, and horror inſupportable ; who, without the aſſiſtance of any other fire, ſheddeſt day through a thouſand realms ; and, not confining thy munificence to realms only, extendeſt thy enlightening influences to ſurrounding worlds : prime chearer of the animal, and great enlivener of the vegetable tribes ! ſo beautiful in thyſelf, ſo beneficial in thy effects, that erring Heathens addreſſed thee with adorations, and miſtook thee for thy Maker !—He, who filled thy orb with a profuſion of luſtre ; luſtre, in its direct emanations, unſufferably bright, but, rebated by thy reflection, delightfully mild : He, before whom thy meridian ſplendors are but a ſhade ; whoſe love transfuſed into thy heart, is infinitely more exhilarating, than even the ſweet and clear ſhining after the rain : HE diveſted himſelf of his all-tranſcending diſtinctions, and drew a veil over the effulgence of his divinity ; that, by ſpeaking to us, face to face, as a man ſpeaketh unto his friend, he might diſpel our intellectual darkneſs. His " viſage was marred *," and he became the ſcorn of men, the outcaſt of the people ; that, by this manifeſtation of his unutterably tender regard for our welfare, he might diffuſe many a gleam of joy thro' our dejected minds : that, in another ſtate of things, he might clothe even our fallen nature, with the honours of that magnificent luminary ; and give all the righteous to ſhine forth as the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father.

THOU *Moon*, that walkeſt among the hoſt of ſtars, and, in thy lucid appearance, art ſuperior to them all :

fair

* If. lii. 14.

fair ruler of the night! ſometimes half-reſtoring the day, with thy waxing brightneſs; ſometimes waning into dimneſs, and ſcarcely ſcattering the nocturnal gloom; ſometimes covered wih ſackcloth, and alarming the gazing nations!—He, who dreſſes thy opake globe, in beaming, but borrowed ſilver; He, whoſe dignity is unchangeable, underived, and all his own; He vouchſafed to wear a body of clay: HE was content to appear as in a bloody eclipſe, ſhorn of his reſplendent beams, and ſurrounded with a night of horror, which knew not one reviving ray.—Thus has he impowered his church, and all believers, to tread the moon under their feet *. Hence, inſpired with the hope of brighter glory, and of more enduring bliſs, are they enabled to triumph over all the vain anxieties, and vainer amuſements, of this ſublunary, precarious, mutable world.

Ye *Thunders*, that, awfully grumbling in the diſtant clouds, ſeem to meditate indignation, and form the firſt eſſays of a far more frightful peal; or, ſuddenly burſting over our heads, rend the vault above, and ſhake the ground below, with the hideous, horrid crack: ye, that ſend your tremendous volleys from pole to pole, ſtartling the ſavage herds †, and aſtoniſhing the human race:—He, who permits terror to ſound her trumpet, in your deep, prolonged, enlarging, aggravated roar: HE uttered a feeble infantile cry in the ſtable, and ſtrong expiring groans on the accurſed tree:—that he might, in the gentleſt accents, whiſper peace to our ſouls; and, at length, tune our voices to the melody of heaven.

O ye *Lightnings*, that brood, and lye couchant, in the ſulphureous vapours; that glance, with forked fury, from the angry gloom, ſwifter and fiercer than the lion

* Rev. xii. 1. † Pſal. xxix. 8.

lion rushes from his den; or open into vast expansive sheets of flame, sublimely waved over the prostrate world, and fearfully lingering in the frighted skies: ye, that formerly laid in ashes the licentious abodes of lust and violence; that will, ere long, set on fire the elements, and co-operate in the conflagration of the globe:—He, who kindles your flash, and directs you when to sally, and where to strike; He, who commissions your whirling bolts, whom to kill, and whom to spare: HE resigned his sacred person to the most barbarous indignities; submitted his beneficent hands to the ponderous hammer, and the piercing nail; yea, with-held not his heart, his very heart, from the stab of the executioner's spear: and, instead of flashing confusion on his outrageous tormentors; instead of striking them dead to the earth, or plunging them to the depths of hell, with his frown; He cried—in his last moments, and with his agonizing lips, He cried, FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO!—O! what a pattern of patience for his saints! What an object of admiration for angels! What a constellation of every mild, amiable, and benign virtue; shining, in this hour of darkness, with ineffable splendor and beauty §! Hence, hence it is, that we are

§ One can hardly forbear animadverting upon the *disingenuous* temper, and perverse taste of *Celsus*; who attempts to turn this most distinguishing and ornamental part of our LORD's life, into ridicule and reproach.—Having spoken of CHRIST, as despitefully used, and arrayed in a purple robe; crowned with thorns; and holding, by way of mock majesty, a reed instead of a sceptre, (for he enters into all these circumstances, which is a testimony to their truth even from the mouth of an enemy;) he adds,—Τι ουκ, ει μη προσθεν, αλλα νυν γουν θειον τι επιδεικνυται και της αισχυνης ταυτης εαυτον ρυηται, και τους υβριζοντας εις εαζτον τε και τον πατερα δικαιοι; Orig. contra CELS. p. 81. i. e. *Why, in the name of wonder, does he not, on this occasion, at least, act the* GOD? *Why does he not deliver himself from this shocking ignominy; or execute some signal vengeance on the authors of such injurious and abusive insults, both of himself and his Father?*—Why,

are not trembling under the lightnings of mount *Sinai*; that we are not blasted by the flames of divine vengeance; or doomed to dwell with everlasting burnings.

Ye frowning *wintry Clouds*; oceans pendent in the air, and burdening the winds: He, in whose hand you are an overflowing scourge; or, by whose appointment, an arsenal * of warlike stores: He, who opens your sluice, and a flood gushes forth, to destroy the fruits of

Why, *Celsus?* Because HE was meekness and gentleness itself; whereas *your* deities were slaves to their own turbulent and resentful passions. Because *they* were little better than savages in human shape; who too often made a merit of slaughter, and took a horrid pride in spilling blood: While Christ was the Prince of peace, and came not to destroy mens lives, but to save. Because any madman on earth, or fury from hell, is capable of venting his rage; but who, amidst such unsufferable provocations and barbarities; who, having in his own hand, the power to rescue himself, the power to avenge himself; could submit to all, with an unruffled serenity of patience and not only not be exasperated, but *overcome*, in so triumphant a manner, *evil with good?* None but Christ! none but Christ! This was compassion worthy of a God; clemency and charity *truly divine*.

Therefore, the calumny raised by the same virulent objector in another place, carries its own confutation; or rather, falls with weight of *infamy* on his dunghill-deities; while it bears a most *honourable* testimony to the majestic and invincible meekness of our Saviour.—Συ μην, says he to the Christian, τα αγαλματα τυτων λερων καταγελας, ος αυτον λε τον Διονυσον η τον Ηρακλεα παροντα ει ελοιδορησας, ουν ισως χαιρων απηλλαξας· τον λε σον Θεον παροντα κατατεινοντες και κολαζοντας, οι ταυτα δρασαντες πεπονθασιν, ibid. p. 404 i. e. *You, indeed, take upon you, to deride the images of our deities; but if* Bacchus *himself*, Hercules *had been present, you would not have dared to offer such an affront; or if you had been so presumptuous, would have sorely smarted for your insolence. Whereas, they who torment the very person of your* God, *and even extended him with mortal agony on the cross, suffered no effects of his displeasure.*

* *Arsenal* seems to consider the clouds, under this same character, in that beautiful line,

Quicquid habent telorum armamentaria cœli.

of the earth, and drown the husbandman's hopes: who moulds you into frozen balls, and you are shot, linked with death *, on the troops of his enemies: HE, instead of discharging the furiousness of his wrath upon this guilty head, poured out his prayers; poured out his sighs; poured out his very soul, for me and my fellow-transgressors:—that, by virtue of his inestimable propitiation, the overflowings of divine good-will might be extended to sinful men; that the skies might pour down righteousness; and peace in her downy wings, peace with her balmy blessings, descend to dwell on earth.

YE *vernal Clouds;* furls of finer air, folds of softer moisture: He, who draws you, in copious exhalations, from the briny deep; bids you leave every distasteful quality behind, and become floating fountains of sweetest waters: He, who dissolves you into gentle rain, and dismisses you in fruitful showers; who kindly commissions you to drop down fatness, as you fall, and to scatter flowers over the field:—HE, in the unutterable bitterness of his spirit, was without any comforting sense of his almighty Father's presence: He, when his bones were burnt up like a firebrand, had not one drop of that sacred consolation, which, on many of his afflicted servants, has been distilled as the evening dews, and

* *Job* has informed us, for what purpose the magazines of the firmament are stocked with hail. That they may be ready *against the day of battle and war.* Job xxxviii. 23. *Joshua* has recorded, what terrible slaughter has been made, those *missive weapons* of the Almighty, *Josh.* x. 11.—Modern historians relate, that, when *Edward* III. invaded *France*, a shower of hailstones descended, of such a prodigious size, as six thousand horses, and one thousand men, were struck dead instantaneously.—But the most dreadful description of these *great ordnance* of the heavens, is given us in *Rev.* xvi. 21. *There fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent.*

and has "given ſongs in the night" of diſtreſs :—that, from this unallayed and inconſolable anguiſh of our all-gracious Maſter, we, as from a well of ſalvation, might derive large draughts of ſpiritual refreſhment.

THOU grand *ethereal Bow;* whoſe beauties fluſh the firmament, and charm every ſpectator: He, who paints thee on the fluid ſkirts of the ſky; who decks thee with all the pride of colours, and bends thee into that graceful and majeſtic figure; at whoſe command, thy vivid ſtreaks ſweetly riſe, or ſwiftly fade :—HE, through all his life, was arrayed in the humble garb of poverty; and, at his exit, wore the gorgeous garment of contempt; inſomuch that even his own familiar friends, aſhamed or afraid to own him, "hid as it "were their faces from him * :"—to teach us a becoming diſdain for the unſubſtantial and tranſitory glitter of all worldly vanities: to introduce us, in robes brighter than the tinges of thy reſplendent arch; even in the robes of his own immaculate righteouſneſs, to introduce us, before that auguſt and venerable throne, which the peaceful rainbow ſurrounds; ſurrounds, as a pledge of inviolable fidelity, and infinite mercy.

Ye *Storms* and *Tempeſts*, which vex the continent, and toſs the ſeas; which daſh navies on the rocks, and drive foreſts from their roots: He, whoſe breath rouſes you into ſuch reſiſtleſs fury, and whoſe nod controls you in your wildeſt career: He, who holds the rapid and raging hurricane in ſtreightened reins; and walks, dreadfully ſerene, on the very wings of the wind: HE went, all meek and gentle, like a lamb to the ſlaughter for us; and, as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth.—Thus are we inſtructed to

* *If.* liii. 3. במסתר פנים ממנו *Fuit tanquam aliquis, a quo quiſque faciem occultaret. He was as ſome* flagitious and *abandoned wretch, from whom every one*, diſdaining ſuch a character, and diſclaiming ſuch an acquaintance, ſtudiouſly *hid his face.*

to bear, with decent magnanimity, the various assaults of adversity; and to pass, with a becoming tranquillity of temper, through all the rude blasts of injurious treatment. Thus are we delivered from the unutterably fiercer storms of incensed and inexorable justice; from the "fire, the brimstone, and the horrible tempest, "which will be the final portion of the ungodly."

THOU *Pestilence*, that scatterest ten thousand poisons from thy baleful wings; tainting the air, and infecting the nations: under whose malignant influence, joy is blasted, and nature sickens; mighty regions are depopulated, and once crouded cities are left without inhabitants: He, who arms thee with inevitable destruction, and bids thee march before * his angry countenance, to spread desolation among the tents of the wicked, and be the forerunner of far more fearful indignation: HE, in his holy humanity, was arraigned as a criminal; and, though innocence itself, yea, the very pattern of perfection, was condemned to die, like the most execrable miscreant. As a nuisance to society, and the very bane of the public happiness, he was hurried away to execution, and hammered to the gibbet: —that, by his blood, he might prepare a sovereign medicine, to cure us of a more fatal distemper, than the pestilence which walketh in darkness, or the sickness which destroyeth at noon-day: that he might himself say to our last enemy, "O death, I will be thy plagues; "O grave, I will be thy destruction †."

HEAT, whose burning influence parches the *Libyan* wilds; tans into soot the *Ethiopian*'s complexion; and makes every species of life pant, and droop, and languish: *Cold*, whose icy breath glazes yearly the *Russian* seas; often glues the frozen sailor to the cordage; and stiffens the traveller into a statue of rigid flesh:

* *Before him went the pestilence*, Hab. iii. 5.
† Hos. xiii. 14.

fleſh :—HE, who ſometimes blends you both, and produces the moſt agreeable temperature ; ſometimes ſuffers you to act ſeparately, and rage with intolerable ſeverity : that King of heaven, and controller of univerſal nature, when dwelling in a tabernacle of clay, was expoſed to chilling damps, and ſmitten by ſultry beams. The ſtars, in their midnight-watches, heard him pray ; and the ſun, in his meridian fervours, ſaw him toil.—Hence are our frozen hearts diſſolved into a mingled flow of wonder, love, and joy ; being conſcious of a deliverance from thoſe inſufferable flames, which, kindled by divine indignation, burn to the loweſt hell.

THOU *Ocean*, vaſt world of waters ! He, who ſunk that capacious bed for thy reception, and poured the liquid element into unfathomable channels ; before whom, all thy foaming billows, and floating mountains, are as the ſmall drop of a bucket : who, by the leaſt intimation of his will, ſwells thy fluid kingdoms, in wild confuſion, to mingle with the clouds ; or reduces them, in calm compoſure, to ſlumber on the ſhores : He, who once gave thee a warrant to overwhelm the whole earth, and bury all its degenerate inhabitants in a watery grave ; but has now laid an everlaſting embargo on thy boiſterous waves ; and bound thee, all fierce and madding as thou art, in chains ſtronger than adamant, yet formed of deſpicable ſand: —all the waves of vengeance and wrath, of tribulation and anguiſh, paſſed over HIS crucified body, and HIS agonizing ſoul : that we might emerge from thoſe depths of miſery, from that abyſs of guilt, into which we were plunged by *Adam*'s fall, and more irretrievably ſunk by our own tranſgreſſions : that, at the laſt, we might be reſtored to that happy world, which is repreſented, in the viſion of GOD, as having "no "ſea *," to denote its perpetual ſtability, and undiſturbed ſerenity.

YE

* Rev. xxi. 1.

YE *Mountains*, that overlook the clouds, and project a shade into distant provinces: everlasting pyramids of nature, not to be shaken by conflicting elements; not to be shattered by the bolts of thunder; nor impaired even by the ravages of time:—He, who bid your ridges rise so high, and your foundations stand so fast: He, in whose scale you are lighter than dust; in whose eye you are less than nothing:—HE sunk beneath a load of woes; woes insupportable, but not his own; when he took our iniquities upon himself, and heaved the more than mountainous burden from a guilty world.

YE verdant *Woods*, that crown our hills, and are crowned yourselves with leafy honours: Ye humble *shrubs*, adorned, in spring, with opening blossoms; and fanned, in summer, by gentle gales: Ye, that in distant climes, or in cultivated gardens, breathe out spicy odours, and embalm the air with delightful perfumes:—your all-glorious and ever-blessed Creator's head was encircled with the thorny wreath; his face was defiled with contumelious spitting; and his body bathed in a bloody sweat: that we might wear the crown, the crown of glory, which fadeth not away; and live for evermore, surrounded with delights, as much surpassing yours, as yours exceed the rugged desolations of winter.

THOU mantling *Vine;* He who hangs on thy slender shoots, the rich, transparent, weighty cluster; who, under thy unornamented foliage, and amidst the pores of thy otherwise worthless bough, prepares the liquor,—the refined and exalted liquor, which chears the nations, and fills the cup of joy: *trees*, whose branches are elevated and waving in air; or diffused in easy confinement, along a sunny wall: He, who bends you with a lovely burden of delicious fruits; whose genial warmth beautifies their rind, and mellows their taste;—HE, when voluntarily subject to our wants,

instead

inſtead of being refreſhed with your generous juices, or regaled with your luſcious pulp, had a loathſome potion of vinegar, mingled with gall, addreſſed to his lips: that we might ſit under the ſhadow of his merits, with great tranquillity and the utmoſt complacency: that, ere long, being admitted into the paradiſe of GOD, we might eat of the Tree of Life *, and drink new wine with him in his Father's kingdom.

YE luxuriant *Meadows;* He who, without the ſeedman's induſtry, repleniſhes your irriguous lap with never-failing crops of herbage; and enamels their chearful green with flowers of every hue:—Ye fertile *Fields;* He, who bleſſes the labours of the huſbandman; enriches your well-tilled plains with waving harveſts, and calls forth the ſtaff of life from your furrows: He, who cauſes both meadows and fields to laugh and ſing, for the abundance of plenty:—HE was no ſtranger to corroding hunger, and parching thirſt; he, alas! ate the bitter bread of wo, and had "plenteouſneſs of "tears to drink:"—that we might partake of richer dainties, than thoſe which are produced by the dew of heaven, and proceed from the fatneſs of the earth: that we might feed on "the hidden manna," and eat the bread which giveth life, eternal life, unto the world.

Ye *Mines*, rich in yellow ore, or bright with veins of ſilver; that diſtribute your ſhining treaſures, as far as winds can waft the veſſel of commerce; that beſtow your alms on monarchs, and have princes for your penſioners:—Ye beds of *gems*, toy-ſhops of nature! which form, in dark retirement, the glittering ſtone: *diamonds*, that ſparkle with a brilliant water; *rubies*, that glow with a crimſon flame: *emeralds*, dipped in the freſheſt verdure of ſpring; *ſapphires*, decked with the faireſt drapery of the ſky: *topaz*, emblazed with a golden gleam; *amethyſt*, impurpled with the bluſhes of the morning:—He, who tinctures the metallic

* Rev. ii. 7.

tallic duſt, and conſolidates the lucid drop; HE, when ſojourning on earth, had no riches, but the riches of diſintereſted benevolence; had no ornament, but the ornament of unſpotted purity. Poor he was in his circumſtances, and mean in all his accommodations; that WE might be rich in grace, and "obtain ſalvation "with eternal glory:" that we might inhabit the new *Jeruſalem*; that ſplendid city! whoſe ſtreets are paved with gold; whoſe gates are formed of pearl; and the walls garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones*.

YE guſhing *Fountains*, that trickle potable ſilver thro' the matted graſs: ye fine tranſparent *Streams*, that glide, in cryſtal waves, along your fringed banks: ye deep and ſtately *Rivers*, that wind and wander in your courſe, to ſpread your favours wider; that gladden kingdoms in your progreſs, and augment the ſea with your tribute:—He, who ſupplies all your currents from his own ever-flowing and inexhauſtible liberality: HE, when his nerves were racked with exquiſite pain, and his blood inflamed by a raging fever, cried, I THIRST; and was denied (unparalleled hardſhip!) in this his great extremity, was denied the poor refreſhment of a ſingle drop of water:—that we, having all ſufficiency in all things, might abound to every good work, might be filled with the fulneſs of ſpiritual bleſſings here, and hereafter be ſatisfied with that fulneſs of joy, which is at GOD's right hand for evermore.

YE *Birds*, chearful tenants of the bough, gaily dreſſed in gloſſy plumage; who wake the morn, and ſolace the groves, with your artleſs lays: inimitable architects! who, without rule or line, build your penſile ſtructures, with all the nicety of proportion: you have each his commodious neſt, roofed with ſhades, and lined with warmth, to protect and cheriſh the callow brood.—But He, who tuned your throats to harmony, and taught you that curious ſkill; HE was a man

* Rev. xxi. 19, 21.

man of ſorrows, and had not where to lay his head; had not where to lay his head, till he felt the pangs of diſſolution, and was laid in the ſilent grave:—that we, dwelling under the wings of Omnipotence, and reſting in the boſom of infinite love, might ſpend an harmonious eternity, in "ſinging the ſong of *Moſes* "and of the LAMB."

BEES, induſtrious workmen! that ſweep, with buſy wing, the flowery garden; and ſearch the blooming heath; and ſip the mellifluous dews: ſtrangers to idleneſs! that ply, with inceſſant aſſiduity, your pleaſing taſk; and ſuffer no opening bloſſom to paſs unexplored, no ſunny gleam to ſlip away unimproved: moſt ingenious artificers! that cling to the fragrant buds; drain them of their treaſured ſweets; and extract (if I may ſo ſpeak) even the odoriferous ſouls of herbs, and plants, and flowers:—you, when you have completed your work; have collected, refined, and ſecurely lodged the ambroſial ſtores; when you might reaſonably expect the peaceful fruition of your acquiſitions; you, alas, are barbarouſly deſtroyed, and leave your hoarded delicacies to others; leave them to be enjoyed by your very murderers. I cannot but pity your hard deſtiny!—How then ſhould my bowels melt with ſympathy, and my eyes flow with tears ‡, when I remember, that *thus*, *thus* it fared with your and our incarnate Maker! After a life of the moſt exemplary and exalted piety; a life filled with offices of beneficence, and labours of love; HE was, by wicked hands, crucified and ſlain. He left the honey of his toil, the balm of his blood, and the riches of his obedience, to be ſhared among others; to be ſhared even among thoſe, who too often crucify him afreſh, and put him to open ſhame.

SHALL I mention the animal, which *ſpins* her ſoft,

‡ Canſt thou, ungrateful man, his torments ſee,
Nor *drop* a *tear* for HIM, who *pour'd* his *blood* for thee?
PITTS's *Poems*.

ſoft, her ſhining, exquiſitely fine *ſilken* thread †? whoſe matchleſs manufactures lend an ornament to grandeur, and make royalty itſelf more magnificent.—Shall I take notice of the cell, in which, when the gaiety and buſineſs of life are over, the little recluſe immures herſelf, and ſpends the remainder of her days in retirement?—Shall I rather obſerve the ſepulchre, which when cloyed with pleaſure and weary of the world, ſhe prepares for her own interment? Or how, when a ſtated period is elapſed, ſhe wakes from a death-like inactivity; breaks the incloſure of her tomb; throws off the duſky ſhroud; aſſumes a new form; puts on a more ſumptuous array; and, from an inſect creeping on the ground, becomes a winged inhabitant of the air?—No: this is a poor *reptile;* and therefore unworthy to ſerve as an illuſtration, when any character of the Son of GOD comes under conſideration. But let me correct myſelf. Was not CHRIST (to uſe the language of his own bleſſed Spirit) *a worm, and no man* ‡? in appearance ſuch, and treated as ſuch. Did he not alſo bequeath the fine linen of his

† No one, I hope, will be offended at my introducing, on *ſuch* an occaſion, creatures of ſo low a rank. Since even the volumes of inſpiration ſeem to lend me the ſanction of their ſacred authority; as they diſdain not to compare the bleſſed JESUS to a *door*, a *highway*, &c. And, perhaps, all compariſons which reſpect a Being of *infinite* dignity, are not only mean, but *equally* mean and unworthy.

I am ſenſible, likewiſe, that in this paragraph, and ſome others, *all* the circumſtances are not completely correſpondent. But if, in *ſome* grand particulars, the reddition anſwers to the deſcription; this, I truſt, will be ſufficient for my purpoſe, and ſatisfactory to my readers.—Perhaps, it would be no miſtaken caution, to apply the ſame obſervation to many of the beutiful ſimilitudes, parables, and allegories, uſed by our LORD; ſuch as the *brazen ſerpent*, the *unjuſt* ſteward, the *thief* in the night, *&c.*; which, if ſcrupulouſly ſifted, or rigorouſly ſtrained, for an entire coincidence in *every* circumſtance, muſt appear to great diſadvantage, and lead into palpable inconveniencies.

‡ Pſal. xxii. 6.

his own moſt perfect righteouſneſs, to compoſe the marriage-garment * for our diſarrayed and defiled ſouls? Did he not, before his fleſh ſaw corruption, emerge triumphant from the grave; and not only mount the lower firmament, but aſcend the heaven of heavens; taking poſſeſſion of thoſe ſublime abodes, in our name, and as our forerunner.

YE

* This, and ſeveral other hints, interſperſed in the two volumes, refer to the *active* and *paſſive* righteouſneſs of CHRIST, *imputed* to believers, for their juſtification: which, in the opinion of many great expoſitors, is the myſtical and the moſt ſublime meaning of the *wedding-garment*, ſo emphatically and forcibly recommended by the Teacher ſent from GOD, *Matth.* xxii. 11. A doctrine, which ſome of thoſe who honour my Meditations with a peruſal, probably may not receive with much, if any, approbation. I hope, the *whole* performance will not be caſhiered, for *one* difference in ſentiment. And I beg, that the ſentiment itſelf may not haſtily be rejected, without a ſerious hearing. For I have the pleaſure of being intimately acquainted with a gentleman of good learning, and diſtinguiſhed ſenſe, who had *once* as ſtrong prepoſſeſſions againſt this tenet, as can well be imagined. Yet *now* he not only admits it, as a truth; but embraces it, as the joy of his heart; and cleaves to it, as the rock of his hopes.

A clear and cogent treatiſe, entitled, *Submiſſion to the righteouſneſs of* GOD, was the inſtrument of removing his prejudices, and reducing him to a better judgment.—In which he has been happily confirmed by the authority of the moſt *illuſtrious* names, and the works of the moſt *eminent* pens, that have ever adorned our church and nation. In this number are,—Biſhop *Jewel*, one of our great reformers; and the other venerable compilers of our homilies;—Archbiſhop *Uſher*, that oracle of univerſal learning;—Biſhop *Hall*, the devout and ſprightly orator of his age;—the copious and fervent Biſhop *Hopkins*;—the ſingularly good and unaffected Biſhop *Beveridge*; that everlaſting honour of the bench of judicature, Lord Chief Juſtice *Hales*;—the nervous, florid, and perſuaſive Dean *Stanhope*;—the practical and perſpicuous Mr *Burkitt*;—and, to ſummon no other evidence, that *matchleſs* genius *Milton*; who, in various parts of his divine poem, inculcates this

YE *Cattle*, that reſt in your incloſed paſtures; ye *beaſts*, that range the unlimited foreſt; ye *fiſh*, that rove thro' trackleſs paths of the ſea: *ſheep*, clad in garments, which, when left by you, are wore by kings: *kine*, who feed on verdure, which, tranſmuted in your bodies, and ſtrained from your udders, furniſhes a repaſt for queens: *lions*, roaring after your prey; *leviathan*, taking your paſtime in the great deep; with all that wing the firmament, or tread the ſoil, or ſwim the wave:—He, who ſpreads his ever-hoſpitable board; who admits you all to be his continual gueſts; and ſuffers you to want no manner of thing that is good:—HE was deſtitute, afflicted, tormented: He endured all that was miſerable and reproachful; in order to exalt a degenerate race, who had debaſed themſelves

this *comfortable* truth; and, in one paſſage, repreſents it under the very ſame image, which is made uſe of above, *book* X. *l.* 222.

I had almoſt forgot to mention, that the treatiſe entitled, *Submiſſion*, &c. was written by Mr *Benjamin Jenks*;—whoſe book of *devotions* has deſervedly paſſed thro' *eleven* editions; is truly admirable for the ſublimity, ſpirituality, and propriety of the ſentiments; as well as for the conciſe form, and pathetic turn of the expreſſion:—Whoſe book of *meditations*, though no leſs worthy of general acceptance, has, for a conſiderable time, been almoſt unknown and extinct. But it is now revived, and is lately publiſhed, in two octavo volumes, by Mr *James Rivington*. For which ſervice he has my thanks; I flatter myſelf, he will have the thanks of the public: as I am perſuaded, could religion and virtue ſpeak, he would have *their* acknowledgments alſo. Since few treatiſes are more happily calculated, to repreſent religion in its native beauty, and to promote the intereſts of genuine virtue.—On which account, I truſt, the *candid* will excuſe me, and the *judicious* will not condemn me, even tho' the recommendation of thoſe devotions of theſe meditations may appear to be a digreſſion from my ſubject.

N. B. *Should the reader be inclined to examine the aforementioned tenet, he will find it ſtated, diſcuſſed, and applied to its due improvement, in a piece entitled* THERON *and* ASPASIO, *in the ſecond and third volumes of this edition.*

ſelves to a level with the beaſts that periſh, unto ſeats of undiſtinguiſhed and immortal honour; in order to introduce the ſlaves of ſin, and heirs of hell, into manſions of conſummate and everlaſting bliſs.

SURELY, the contemplation of ſuch a ſubject, and the diſtant anticipation of ſuch a hope, may almoſt turn earth into heaven, and make even inanimate nature vocal with praiſe. Let it then break forth from every creature. Let the *meaneſt* feel the inſpiring impulſe; let the *greateſt* acknowledge themſelves unable, worthily to expreſs the ſtupendous goodneſs.

Praiſe HIM, ye *inſects* that crawl on the ground; who, though high above all height, humbled himſelf to dwell in duſt. *Birds* of the air, waft on your wings, and warble in your notes, HIS praiſe; who, though LORD of the celeſtial abodes, while ſojourning on earth, wanted a ſhelter commodious as your neſts.—Ye rougher world of *brutes*, join with the gentle ſongſters of the ſhade, and howl to HIM your hoarſe applauſe; who breaks the jaw-bones of the infernal lion; who ſoftens into mildneſs the ſavage diſpoſition; and bids the wolf lye down, in amicable agreement with the lamb. *Bleat* out, ye hills; let broader *lows* be reſponſive from the vales; ye foreſts catch, and ye rocks retain, the inarticulate hymn; becauſe MESSIAH the Prince *feeds his flock, like a ſhepherd. He gathers the lambs with his arm; he carries them in his boſom; and gently leads thoſe that are with young* *.—Wave, ye ſtately *cedars*, in ſign of worſhip, wave your branching heads to HIM, who meekly bowed his own, on the accurſed tree. Pleaſing *proſpects*, ſcenes of beauty, where niceſt art conſpires with laviſh nature, to form a paradiſe below; lay forth all your charms, and in all your charms confeſs yourſelves a mere blank, compared with his amiableneſs, who is "faireſt among ten thouſand, and altogether lovely."

—Drop

* Iſ. xl. 11.

—Drop down, ye *showers;* and testify, as you fall; testify of his grace, which descends more copiously than the rain, distils more sweetly than the dew. Let sighing *gales* breathe, and murmuring *rivulets* flow; breathe and flow in harmonious consonance to HIM; whose Spirit is far more reviving than the cooling breeze; who is himself the fountain of living waters.

YE *Lightnings*, blaze to his honour; ye *Thunders*, sound HIS praise; while reverberating *clouds* return the roar, and bellowing *oceans* propagate the tremendous anthem.—*Meutest* of creatures, add your silent oratory, and display the triumphs of HIS meekness; who, though he maketh the clouds his chariot, and treadeth upon the waves of the sea; tho' the thunder is his voice, and the lightning his sword of justice; yet, amidst the most abusive and cruel injuries, was submissive and lifted not his hand, was "dumb and "opened not his mouth."—Great *source of day*, address thy radiant homage to a far sublimer sun. Write, in all thy ample round, with every lucid beam, O! write a testimony to HIM, who is the brightness of his Father's glory; who is the Sun of righteousness to a sinful world; and is risen, never to go down; is risen, to be our everlasting light.—Shine clear, ye *Skies;* look gay, thou *Earth;* let the *floods* clap their hands, and let *every* creature wear a smile: for he cometh, the CREATOR himself cometh, to be manifested in the flesh; and with him comes pardon, peace, and joy; every virtue and all felicity comes in his train.—*Angels* and *archangels*, let your songs be of JESUS, and teach the very heavens to echo with his adored and majestic name. Ye beheld him, with greater transports of admiration, when you attended his agony in the garden, and saw him prostrate on the ground, than when you beheld universal nature rising at his call, and saw the wonders of his creating might. Tune to loftiest notes your golden harps, and waken raptures unknown before even in heavenly breasts: while all

that

that has *breath* ſwells the concert of harmony; and all that has *being* unites in the tribute of praiſe.

Chiefly, let *man* exalt his voice; let man, with diſtinguiſhed hoſannas, hail the REDEEMER. For man, he was ſtretched on the racking croſs; for man, he was conſigned to the gloomy ſepulchre; for man, he procured grace unmeaſurable, and bliſs inconceivable.—However *different*, therefore, in your age, or more different in your circumſtances, be *unanimous*, O men, in magnifying a Saviour, who is no reſpecter of perſons, who gave himſelf a ranſom for all.—Bend, ye *kings*, from your thrones of ivory and gold; in your robes of imperial purple, fall proſtrate at HIS feet; who forſook a nobler throne, and laid aſide more illuſtrious enſigns of majeſty, that you might reign with GOD for ever and ever.—*Children* of *poverty*, meaneſt of mortals, (if any can be called poor, who are thus enriched; if any can be accounted mean, who are *thus* ennobled,) rejoice, greatly rejoice, in GOD your Saviour; who choſe to be indigent, was willing to be contemned, that you might be entitled to the treaſures, and be numbered with the princes of heaven.—*Sons* of *affliction*, tho' haraſſed with pain, and inured to anguiſh, O! change your groans into ſongs of gratitude. Let no complaining voice, no jarring ſtring be heard, in the univerſal ſymphony; but *glorify* the LAMB even *in the fires* §; who himſelf bore greater torment, than you feel; and has promiſed you a ſhare in the joy which he inherits; who has made your ſufferings ſhort, and will make your reſt eternal. —*Men* of *hoary* locks, bending beneath a weight of years, and tottering on the brink of the grave; let CHRIST be your ſupport, under all infirmities; lean upon CHRIST, as the rock of your ſalvation. Let his name, his precious name, form the laſt accents, which quiver on your pale expiring lips.—And let this be the firſt, that liſps on your tongues, ye tender *infants*. Remember your REDEEMER, in your earlieſt

§ Iſ. xxiv. 15.

earlieſt moments. Devote the choice of your hours to the learning of his will, and the chief of your ſtrength to the glorifying of HIS name; who, in the perfection of health, and the very prime of manhood, was content to become a motionleſs and ghaſtly corpſe, that you might be girt with the vigour, and clothed with the bloom, of eternal youth.

Ye *ſpirits* of *juſt* men made *perfect*, who are releaſed from the burden of the fleſh; and freed from all the vexatious ſolicitations of corruption in yourſelves; delivered from all the injurious effects of iniquity in others: who ſojourn no longer in the tents of ſtrife, or the territories of diſorder; but are received into that pure, harmonious, holy ſociety, where every one acts up to his amiable and exalted character; where GOD himſelf is pleaſed *graciouſly* and *immediately* to preſide.—You find, not without pleaſing aſtoniſhment, your hopes improved into actual enjoyment, and your faith ſuperſeded by the beatific viſion. You feel all your former ſhyneſs of behaviour, happily loſt in the overflowings of unbounded love; and all your little differences of opinion, entirely bore down by tides of invariable truth. Bleſs, therefore, with all your enlarged powers, bleſs *his* infinitely larger goodneſs; who, when he had overcome the ſharpneſs of death, opened the gates of paradiſe, opened the kingdom of heaven, to all generations, and to every denomination of the faithful.

Ye men of *holy* converſation, and *humble* tempers, think of HIM, who *loved you, and waſhed you from your ſins in his own blood*. Think of him, on your ſilent couch; talk of him, in every ſocial interview. Glory in his excellencies; make your boaſt of his obedience; and add, ſtill continue to add, the incenſe of a dutiful life, to all the oblations of a grateful tongue.—*Weakeſt* of *believers*, who go mourning under a ſenſe of guilt, and conflicting with the caſeleſs aſſaults

aſſaults of temptation; put off your ſackcloth, and be girded with gladneſs. Becauſe JESUS is as merciful to hear, as he is mighty to help. Becauſe he is touched with the tendereſt ſympathizing concern, for all your diſtreſſes; and he lives, ever lives, to be your *Advocate* with the FATHER. Why then ſhould uneaſy doubts ſadden your countenances? why ſhould deſponding fears oppreſs your ſouls? Turn, turn thoſe diſconſolate ſighs into chearful hymns; ſince you have his *powerful interceſſion*, and his *ineſtimable merits*, to be your anchor in all tribulations, to be your paſſport into eternal bleſſedneſs.

MOST of all, ye *miniſters* of the *ſanctuary*, heralds commiſſioned from above; lift, every one, his voice like a trumpet, and loudly proclaim the REDEEMER. Get ye up, ye ambaſſadors of peace, get ye up into the high mountains; and ſpread far and wide the honours of the LAMB, "that was ſlain, but is alive "for evermore." Teach every ſacred roof to reſound with his fame; and every human heart to glow with his love. Declare, as far as the force of words will go, declare the inexhauſtible fulneſs of that great atonement, whoſe merits are commenſurate with the glories of the DIVINITY *. Tell the ſinful wretch, what pity yearns in IMMANUEL's bowels; what blood he has ſpilt, what agonies he has endured, what wonders he has wrought, for the ſalvation of his enemies. Invite the indigent, to become rich; intreat the guilty, to accept of pardon; becauſe with the crucified JESUS is plenteous redemption, and all-ſufficiency to ſave.—While you, placed in conſpicuous ſtations pour the joyful ſound; may I, as I ſteal through the vale of humble life, catch the pleaſing accents! For *me*, the

* If in this place and others, I have ſpoken magnificently of the blood of CHRIST, and its inſuperable efficacy to expiate guilt; I think, it is no more than is expreſſed in a very celebrated hymn, written by one of the greateſt *wits*, who had alſo been one of the greateſt *libertines*, and afterwards commenced

the Author of all bleſſings became a curſe ; for *me*, his bones were diſlocated, and his fleſh was torn ; he hung with ſtreaming veins, and an agonizing ſoul, on the croſs, for *me*. O ! may I, in my little ſphere, and amidſt the ſcanty circle of my acquaintance, at leaſt whiſper theſe glad tranſporting tidings ; whiſper them from my own heart, that they may ſurely reach, and ſweetly penetrate theirs.

But, when men and angels raiſe the grand hymn ; when all worlds, and all beings, add their *collective* acclamations ; this full, fervent, and univerſal chorus will be ſo *inferior* to the riches of the REDEEMER's grace ; ſo *diſproportionate* to the magnificence of his glory, that it will ſeem but to *debaſe* the unutterable ſubject it attempts to exalt. The loud Hallelujah will *die away*, in the ſolemn mental eloquence of proſtrate, rapturous, *ſilent* adoration.

O goodneſs infinite ! goodneſs immenſe !
And love that paſſeth knowledge !—*Words are vain ;*
Language is loſt in wonders ſo divine.
" *Come then, expreſſive* SILENCE, *muſe his praiſe.*"

CON-

commenced one of the moſt remarkable *penitents*, in *France* : A hymn, which even Mr *Bayle* confeſſes to be a *very fine* one : which another great critic calls an *admirable* one ; and which a genius ſuperior to them both recommends as a *noble* one. (See *Spect.* vol. VII. N° 513.)

The author, having acknowledged his crimes to be beyond meaſure hainous, and almoſt beyond forgiveneſs provoking ; ſo provoking, as to render tears from ſuch eyes offenſive, and prayers from ſuch lips abominable ;—compoſes himſelf to ſubmit, without the leaſt repining ſentiment ; to ſubmit, even with praiſe and adoration, to the moſt dreadful doom. Accordingly, he ſtands in reſigned expectation of being inſtantly ſtruck by the bolts of vengeance : but—with a turn of thought equally ſurpriſing and ſprightly ; with a faith properly founded, and happily firm ; he adds,

Yet where ! O where ! *can* ev'n thy thunders fall ?
CHRIST's blood o'erſpreads and ſhields me from them *all*.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON

THE NIGHT,

AND

THE STARRY HEAVENS,

AND

A WINTER-PIECE.

My meditation of him shall be sweet. Psal. civ. 34.

TO

PAUL ORCHARD,

Of *Stock-Abbey*, in *Devonſhire*, Eſq.

Dear SIR,

AS your honoured father was pleaſed to make choice of me to anſwer in your name at the font, and to exerciſe a ſort of *guardianſhip* over your ſpiritual intereſts; permit me, by putting theſe little treatiſes into your hand, to fulfil ſome part of that ſolemn obligation.

GRATITUDE for many ſignal favours, and a conſcientious regard to my ſacred engagement, have long ago inſpired my breaſt with the warmeſt wiſhes, both for your true *dignity*, and real *happineſs*. Nor can I think of a more endearing, or a more effectual way, of advancing either the one or the other, than to ſet before you a ſketch of your excellent *father*'s character.—Illuſtrious examples are the moſt winning incitements to virtue. And none can come attended with ſuch particular recommendations to YOU, Sir, as the pattern of that worthy perſon, from whom you derive your very being.

A MOST cordial and reverential eſteem for the *divine word*, was one of his remarkable qualities. Thoſe oracles of heaven were his principal delight, and his inſeparable companions. Your gardens, your ſolitary walks, and the hedges of your fields, can witneſs *, with what an unwearied aſſiduity he exerciſed himſelf in the law of the LORD. From hence he fetched his

* Joſh. xxiv. 27.

his maxims of wisdom, and formed his judgment of things. The sacred *precepts* were the model of his temper, and the guide of his life; while the precious *promises* were the joy of his heart, and his portion for ever.

IMPROVING company was another of his most relishing pleasures. Few gentlemen were better furnished, either with richness of fancy, or copiousness of expression, to bear a shining part in conversation. With these talents, he always endeavoured to give some *useful*, generally some *religious*, turn to the discourse. Nor did he ever reflect, with greater complacency, on his social hours, than when they tended to glorify the eternal Majesty; and to awaken, in himself and others, a more lively spirit of devotion.

To project for the good of others, was his frequent *study;* and to carry those benevolent contrivances into execution, his favourite *employ*. When visited by the young persons of the neighbourhood, far from taking an ungraceful pride to initiate them in debauchery, or confirm them in a riotous habit; it was his incessant aim, by finely-adapted persuasives, to encourage them in *industry*, and establish them in a course of *sobriety;* to *guard* them against the allurements of vice, and *animate* them with the principles of piety. A noble kind of hospitality this! which will probably transmit its beneficial influence to their earthly possessions, to their future families, and even to their everlasting state.

A CONVICTION of human indigence, and a thorough persuasion of the divine all-sufficiency, induced him to be *frequent in prayer*. To prostrate himself, in profound adoration, before that infinitely exalted Being, who dwells in light inaccessible, was *his glory;* to implore the continuance of the almighty favour, and the increase of all Christian graces was *his gain*. In those moments, no doubt, he remembered YOU, Sir, with a particular earnest-

ness

neſs; and lodged many an ardent petition in the court of heaven, for his infant-ſon. Ceaſe not to ſecond them with your own devout ſupplications, that they may deſcend upon your head, "in the fulneſs of "the bleſſings of the goſpel of peace."

To give their genuine luſtre to all his other endowments, he was careful to maintain an *humble mind*. Tho' his friends might admire his ſuperior abillities, or his acquaintance applaud his exemplary behaviour, he ſaw how far he *fell ſhort* of the mark of his high calling; ſaw, and lamented his defects; ſaw, and renounced himſelf; relying, for final acceptance, and endleſs felicity, on a *better righteouſneſs* than his own; even on the tranſcendently perfect righteouſneſs, and inconceivably precious death, of JESUS the Redeemer. This was the rock of his hope, and the very crown of his rejoicing.

THESE, Sir, are ſome of the *diſtinguiſhing* characteriſtics of your deceaſed parent. As you had the misfortune to loſe ſo valuable a relative, before you was capable of forming any acquaintance with his perſon; I flatter myſelf, you will the more attentively obſerve his picture: this his *moral picture;* deſigned, not to be ſet in gold, or ſparkle in enamel, but to breathe in your ſpirit, and to live in all your conduct.—Which, tho' it be entirely your own, calculated purely for yourſelf, may poſſibly (like the family-pieces in your parlour, that glance an eye upon as many as enter the room) make ſome *pleaſing* and *uſeful* impreſſion on every beholder.—May every one, charmed with the beautiful image, catch its reſemblance; and each, in his reſpective ſphere, "go and "do likewiſe."

BUT you, Sir, are peculiarly concerned to copy the amiable original. As the order of an indulgent Providence has made you heir of the *affluent circumſtances*, let not a gay and thoughtleſs inadvertence cut you off from the *richer inheritance* of theſe noble

qualifications.—These will be your security, amidst all the glittering dangers, which are inseparable from blooming years, and an elevated situation in life. These are your path, your sure and only path, to true greatness and solid happiness.—Tread in these steps, and you cannot fail to be the darling of your friends, and the favourite of heaven. Tread in these steps, and you will give inexpressible joy to one of the best of mothers; you will become an extensive blessing to your fellow-creatures; and which, after such most engaging motives, is scarce worthy to be mentioned, you will be the delight, the honour, and the boast of,

Dear SIR,

Your very affectionate godfather,

And most faithful humble servant,

Weston-Favell, *near*
Northampton,
July 14. 1747.

JAMES HERVEY.

PREFACE.

WE have already exerciſed our ſpeculations on the tombs and flowers; ſurveying nature, covered with the deepeſt horrors, and arrayed in the richeſt beauties. Allegory *taught many of the objects to ſpeak the language of virtue, while* Imagination *lent her colouring to give the leſſons an engaging air.—And this, with a view of imitating that* divine *Inſtructor; who commiſſioned the* lily §, *in her ſilver ſuit, to remonſtrate in the ear of unbelieving reaſon; who ſent his diſciples* (*men ordained to* teach *the univerſe*) *to* learn *maxims of the laſt importance, from the moſt* inſignificant *birds* §, *that wander thro' the paths of the air; from the very* meaneſt *herbs* §, *that are ſcattered over the face of the* † *ground.*

Emboldened

§ Matth. vi. 26. 28. 29. 30.

† Celebrated writers, as *Demoſthenes* and *Cicero*, *Thucydides* and *Livy*, are obſerved to have a ſtyle peculiar to themſelves.—Now, whoever conſiders the diſcourſes of *Chriſt*, will find him diſtinguiſhing himſelf by a ſtyle, which may properly be called *HIS OWN.* Majeſtic, yet familiar; happily uniting dignity with condeſcenſion; it conſiſts, in teaching his followers the *ſublimeſt* truths, by ſpiritualizing on the moſt *common* occurrences: which, beſides its being level to the loweſt apprehenſions, and admirably adapted to ſteal into the moſt inattentive heart, is accompanied with this very ſingular advantage, that it turns even the *ſphere of buſineſs* into a *ſchool of inſtruction*; and renders the moſt ordinary objects a ſet of monitors,

Emboldened by the kind acceptance of the preceding ſketches, I beg leave to confide in the ſame benevolence *of* taſte, *for the protection and ſupport of the two remaining eſſays; which exhibit a proſpect of* ſtill life, *and* grand operation; *which moralize on the moſt compoſed, and moſt magnificent, appearances of things.—In which,* Fancy *is again ſuffered to introduce her imagery, but only as the handmaid of* Truth, *in order to dreſs her perſon, and diſplay her charms; to engage the attention, and win the love, even of the* gay, *and of the* faſhionable. *Which is more likely to be effected, by forming agreeable pictures of nature, and deriving inſtructive obſervations, than by the laborious method of long-deduced arguments, or cloſe-connected reaſonings.—The contemplation of the heavens and the earth, of their admirable properties and beneficial changes, has always afforded the moſt exalted gratification to the human mind. In compliance with this prevailing taſte, I have drawn my ſerious admonitions from the ſtupendous theatre, and variegated ſcenery, of the univerſe: that the reader may learn his duty from his very pleaſures;—may gather* wiſdom, *mingled*

nitors, ever ſoliciting our regard, becauſe ever preſent to our ſenſes.—So that, I believe, it may be ſaid of this *amiable method* in which our LORD conveyed, as well as that of *powerful energy* which attended his doctrines, That *never man ſpake like this man.*—The *harveſt* approaching, he reminds his diſciples of a far more important harveſt, John iv. 35. Matt. xiii. 39. when immortal beings ſhall be *reaped* from the grave, and *gathered in* from all the quarters of the earth; when every human creature ſhall ſuſtain the character of valuable *wheat*, or deſpicable *tares*; and accordingly be lodged in manſions of everlaſting ſecurity, or conſigned over to the rage of unquenchable fire.—In his charge to *fiſhermen*, when they are commencing preachers, *Matth.* iv. 19. he exhorts them, conformably to the nature of their late occupation, to uſe the ſame *aſſiduity* and *addreſs* in winning ſouls, as they were wont to exerciſe in catching the finny prey.—For the farther illuſtration of this no leſs uſeful, than curious ſubject, I would refer my reader to a valuable note, in Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s obſervations on the prophecies, p. 148. 4to edition.

gled with virtue, *from the moſt refined* entertainments, *and nobleſt* delights.

The Evening, *drawing her ſables over the world, and gently darkening into* Night, *is a ſeaſon peculiarly proper for ſedate conſideration. All circumſtances concur to huſh our paſſions, and ſoothe our cares; to tempt our ſteps abroad, and prompt our thoughts to ſerious reflection.*

——— Then is the time,
For thoſe whom wiſdom, and whom nature charm,
To ſteal themſelves from the degen'rate croud,
And ſoar above this little ſcene of things;
To tread low-thoughted vice beneath their feet;
To ſooth the throbbing paſſions into peace;
And woo lone Quiet in her ſilent walks †.

The favour I would ſolicit for the firſt *of the following compoſitions, is, That it may be permitted to attend, in ſuch retired and contemplative excurſions; to attend if not under the character of a friend, at leaſt, in the humble capacity of a ſervant, or a page:—as a* ſervant, *to open the door of meditation, and remove every impediment to thoſe beſt exerciſes of the mind; which blend advantage with amuſement, and improve while they delight:—as a* page, *to gather up the unſtable, fluctuating train of Fancy; and collect her fickle powers into a conſiſtant, regular, and uſeful habit of thinking.*

The other, *converſant among the* ſtarry regions, *would lead the imagination thro' thoſe beautiful tracts of unclouded azure; and point out to the judgment ſome of thoſe aſtoniſhing particulars, which ſo eminently ſignalize the celeſtial worlds. A proſpect this, to which curioſity attracts our eyes, and to which ſcripture itſelf often directs our ſtudy: A proſpect beyond all others moſt excellently calculated* to enlarge *the ſoul, and*

† THOMS. Autumn, l. 973. laſt edit.

end ennoble *its conceptions;—to give grandeſt apprehenſions of the* everlaſting *GOD, and create ſentiments of becoming ſuperiority, with relation to all* tranſitory *intereſts;—in a word, to furniſh* faith *with the ſureſt foundation for a ſteady affiance and true magnanimity of ſpirit; to afford* piety *the ſtrongeſt motives both for a lively gratitude, and profound veneration.*

While Galilæo *lifts his tube, and diſcovers the prodigious magnitude of thoſe radiant orbs;—while* Newton *meaſures their amazing diſtances, and unites the whole ſyſtem in harmonious order, by the ſubtle influences of attraction:—I would only, like the herald before that illuſtrious* Hebrew ‡, *proclaim at every turn,* "Bow the knee, *and adore the almighty Maker;* "*magnify his eternal name,* and make his praiſe, *like* "*all his works,* to be glorious."

‡ Gen. xli. 43.

CON-

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

NIGHT.

Night *is fair* Virtue's *immemorial friend:*
The conscious Moon, *through ev'ry distant age,*
Has held a lamp to Wisdom.
Night-Thoughts, N° V.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

NIGHT.

THE buſineſs of the day diſpatched, and the ſultry heats abated, invited me to the recreation of a walk; a walk in one of the *fineſt receſſes* of the country, and in one of the moſt *pleaſant evenings* which the ſummer-ſeaſon produced.

The limes and elms, uniting their branches over my head, formed a *verdant canopy*, and caſt a moſt refreſhing ſhade. Under my feet lay a *carpet* of nature's *velvet;* graſs intermingled with moſs, and embroidered with flowers. Jeſſamines, in conjunction with woodbines, twined around the trees, diſplaying their *artleſs beauties* to the eye, and diffuſing their *delicious ſweets* through the air. On either ſide, the boughs, rounded into a ſet of regular arches, opened a view into the *diſtant fields*, and preſented me with a proſpect of the *bending ſkies*. The little birds, all joyous and grateful for the favours of the light, were paying their acknowledgments in a *tribute* of *harmony*, and ſoothing themſelves to reſt with ſongs.

While a French-horn, from a neighbouring ſeat, ſent its melodious accents, ſoftened by the length of their paſſage, to complete the *concert* of the *grove*.

Roving in this agreeable manner, my thoughts were exerciſed on a ſubject ſtill more agreeable than the ſeaſon, or the ſcene. I mean, our late *ſignal victory* over the united forces of inteſtine treaſon, and foreign invaſion: a victory, which pours joy through the preſent age, and will tranſmit its influence to generations yet unborn.—Are not all the bleſſings, which can endear ſociety, or render life itſelf deſirable, centred in our preſent happy conſtitution, and auſpicious government? Were they not *all* ſtruck at, by that impious and horrid blow, meditated at *Rome*, levelled by *France*, and ſeconded by factious ſpirits at *home*? Who then can be ſufficiently thankful for the gracious interpoſition of Providence, which has not only averted the impending ruin, but turned it, with aggravated confuſion, on the authors of our troubles?

Methinks, every thing *valuable* which I poſſeſs, every thing *charming* which I behold, conſpire to enhance this ever-memorable event. To this it is owing, that I can ramble unmoleſted along the vale of private life, and taſte all the innocent ſatisfactions of a *contemplative* retirement.—Had rebellion * ſucceeded in her deteſtable deſigns; inſtead of walking with ſecurity and complacence in theſe flowery paths, I might have met the *aſſaſſin* with his *dagger*; or have been obliged to abandon my habitation, and "embrace "the rock for a ſhelter."—Farewell then, ye fragrant ſhades; ſeats of meditation, and calm repoſe! I ſhould have been driven from your loved retreats, to make way for ſome barbarous, ſome *inſulting victor*.—Farewell

* Referring to the rebellion, ſet on foot in the year 1745; —which, for ſeveral months, made a very alarming progreſs in the north;—but was happily extinguiſhed by the glorious and deciſive victory at *Culloden*.

well then, ye pleasing toils, and wholesome amusements of my rural hours! I should no more have reared the tender flower to the sun; no more have taught the espalier to expand her boughs; nor have fetched, any longer, from my kitchen-garden, the purest supplies of health.

Had Rebellion succeeded in her detestable designs; instead of being regaled with the *music* of the *woods*, I might have been alarmed with the sound of the trumpet, and all the thunder of war. Instead of being entertained with this *beautiful landscape*, I might have beheld our houses ransacked, and our villages plundered; I might have beheld our fenced cities encompassed with armies, and our fruitful fields "cloth-"ed with desolation;" or have been shocked with the more frightful images of "garments rolled in blood," and of a ruffian's blade reeking from a brother's heart. Instead of Peace, with her chearing olives, sheltering our abodes; instead of Justice, with her impartial scale, securing our goods; *Persecution* had brandished her sword, and *Slavery* clanked her chains.

Nor are these miseries imaginary only, or the creatures of a groundless panic. There are, in a neighbouring kingdom, who very lately experienced them in all their rigour *. And, if the *malignant* spirit of *Popery* had forced itself into our church; if an *abjured pretender* had cut his way to our throne; we could have no reason to expect a mitigation of their severity, on our behalf.—But, supposing the tender mercies of a bigotted usurper to have been somewhat less cruel; where, alas! would have been the encouragement to cultivate our little portion; or what pleasure could arise from an improved spot; if both the one and the other lay, every moment, at the mercy of *lawless* power?

* See a pamphlet, entitled, *Popery always the same*;—which contains a narrative of the *persecutions*, and severe hardships, lately suffered by the *Protestants* in the southern parts of *France*; and closes with a most seasonable, alarming, and spirited address to the inhabitants of *Great Britain*. Printed 1746.

power? This embittering circumstance would spoil their relish; and by rendering them a *precarious*, would render them a *joyless* acquisition.—In vain might the vine spread her purple clusters; in vain be lavish of her generous juices; if *Tyranny*, like a ravenous harpy, should be always hovering over the bowl, and ready to snatch it from the lip of Industry, or to wrest it from the hand of Liberty.

LIBERTY, that dearest of names; and *Property*, that best of charters, give an additional, an inexpressible charm, to every delightful object.—See, how the declining sun has beautified the *western clouds;* has arrayed them in crimson, and skirted them with gold. Such a refinement of our domestic bliss is property; such an improvement of our public privileges is liberty.—When the lamp of day shall withdraw his beams, there will still remain the same collection of floating vapours; but O! how changed, how gloomy! The carnation-streaks are faded; the golden edgings are worn away; and all the lovely tinges are lost, in a *leaden-coloured louring* sadness. *Such* would be the aspect of all these scenes of beauty, and all these abodes of pleasure, if exposed continually to the caprice of arbitrary sway, or held in a state of abject and cringing dependence.

The sun has almost finished his daily race, and hastens to the goal. He descends lower and lower, till his chariot-wheels seem to hover on the utmost verge of the sky. What is somewhat remarkable, the orb of light, upon the point of setting, grows considerably *broader*. The shadows of objects, just before they become blended in undistinguishable darkness, are exceedingly *lengthened**.—Like blessings, little prized, while *possessed;* but highly esteemed, the very instant they are preparing for their flight; bitterly regretted, when once they are gone, and to be seen no more.

The radiant globe is, now, half-immersed beneath the

* *Majoresque cadunt altis de montibus umbræ.* VIRG.

the dusky earth; or, as the ancient poets speak, is shooting into the ocean, and sinks in the western sea. —And could I view the *sea* at this juncture, it would yield a most amusing and curious spectacle. The rays, striking horizontally on the liquid element, give it the appearance of floating glass; or, reflected in many a different direction, form a beautiful multiplicity of colours.—A stranger, as he walks along the sandy beach, and, lost in pensive attention, listens to the murmurings of the restless flood, is agreeably alarmed by the *gay decorations* of the surface. With entertainment and with wonder, he sees the curling waves, here glistering with white, there glowing with purple; in one place, wearing an azure tincture; in another, glancing a cast of undulating green; in the whole, exhibiting a piece of *fluid scenery*, that may vie with yonder pensile tapestries, tho' wrought in the loom, and tinged with the dyes of heaven.

While I am transported by fancy to the shores of the ocean, the great luminary is sunk beneath the horizon, and totally disappears. The whole face of the ground is overspread with shades; or, with what one of the finest painters of nature calls, a *dun obscurity*. Only a few very superior eminences are tipt with streaming silver. The tops of groves, and lofty towers, catch the *last smiles* of day *; are still irradiated by the departing beams.—But, O! how transient is the distinction! how momentary the gift! Like all the blessings, which mortals enjoy below, it is *gone* almost, as soon as *granted*. See! how languishingly it trembles on the leafy spire; and glimmers, with a dying faintness, on the mountain's brow. The little vivacity that remains, decays every moment. It can no longer hold

* See this remarkable appearance delicately described, and wrought into a comparison, which, in my opinion, is one of the most just, beautiful, and noble pieces of imagery, to be found in modern poetry; *Night-Thoughts*, N° II. p. 42. 4to edit.

hold its ſtation. While I ſpeak, it expires; and reſigns the world to the gradual approaches of night.

——*Now* twilight *grey*
Has in her ſober liv'ry all things clad *.

Every object, a little while ago, glared with light; but now all appears under a more qualified luſtre. The animals harmonize with the inſenſible creation; and what was *gay* in thoſe, as well as *glittering* in this, gives place to an univerſal *gravity*. In the meadows, all was jocund and ſportive; but now the gameſome lambs are grown weary of their frolics, and the tired ſhepherd has impoſed ſilence on his pipe. In the branches all was ſprightlineſs and ſong: but now the lively green is wrapt in the deſcending glooms; and no tuneful airs are heard, only the plaintive ſtock-dove, cooing mournfully through the grove.—Should I now be vain and trifling, the heavens and the earth would rebuke my unſeaſonable levity. Therefore, be theſe moments devoted to thoughts *ſedate* as the cloſing day, *ſolemn* as the face of things. And, indeed, however my ſocial hours are enlivened with innocent pleaſantry, let every evening, in her ſable habit, toll the bell to ſerious conſideration. Nothing can be more proper, for a perſon who walks on the borders of eternity, and is haſting continually to his final audit; nothing more proper, than daily to ſlip away from the circle of amuſements, and frequently to relinquiſh the hurry of buſineſs, in order to conſider and adjuſt "the things that belong to his peace."

SINCE the ſun is departed, from whence can it proceed, that I am not involved in pitchy darkneſs? Whence theſe remainders of *diminiſhed brightneſs?* which, though ſcarcely forming a refulgence, ſoften and ſooth the horrors of night. I ſee not the ſhining ruler, yet am cheared with a real, though faint communication

* MILT. *Par. Loſt*, b. IV. l. 598.

munication of his ſplendor.—Does he remember us, in his progreſs through other climes? Does he ſend a *detachment* of his rays to *eſcort* us during his perſonal abſence; or to *cover* (if I may uſe the military term) our *retreat* from the ſcene of action? Has he bequeathed us a dividend of his beams, ſufficient to render our circumſtances eaſy, and our ſituation agreeable? till ſleep pours its ſoft oppreſſion on the organs of ſenſe; till ſleep ſuſpends all the operations of our hands, and entirely ſuperſedes any farther occaſion for the light.

No: it is ill judged and unreaſonable, to aſcribe this beneficent conduct to the ſun. Not unto him, not unto him; but unto his *almighty Maker*, we are obliged, for this pleaſing attendant, this valuable legacy. The gracious Author of our being has ſo diſpoſed the collection of circumambient air, as to make it productive of this fine and wonderful effect. The ſunbeams, falling on the higher parts of the æreal fluid, inſtead of paſſing on in ſtrait lines, are bent inwards, and conducted to our ſight. Their natural courſe is over-ruled, and they are bidden to wheel about, on purpoſe to favour us with a welcome and ſalutary viſit.—By which means, the bleſſing of light, and the ſeaſon of buſineſs, are conſiderably prolonged; and, what is a very endearing circumſtance, prolonged moſt conſiderably, when the vehement heats of ſummer incline the *ſtudent* to poſtpone his walk, till the temperate evening prevails; when the important labours of the harveſt call the *huſbandman* abroad, before the day is fully riſen.

AFTER all the ardors of the ſultry day, how reviving is this *coolneſs!*—This gives new verdure to the fading plants, new vivacity to the withering flowers, and a more exquiſite fragrance to their mingled ſcents. —By this, the *air* alſo receives a new force, and is qualified to exert itſelf with greater activity: qualified

to brace our limbs; to heave our lungs; and co-operate, with a briſker impulſe, in perpetuating the circulation of our blood.—This I might call the grand *alembic* of nature; which diſtils her moſt ſovereign *cordial*, the refreſhing *dews*. Inceſſant heat would rob us of their beneficial agency; and oblige them to evaporate, in imperceptible exhalations. Turbulent winds, or even the gentler motions of *Aurora's* fan, would diſſipate the riſing vapours, and not ſuffer them to form a coalition. But, favoured by the ſtillneſs, and condenſed by the coolneſs of the night, they unite in pearly drops, and create that *finely-tempered* humidity, which chears the vegetable world, as ſleep exhilarates the animal.

Not unlike to theſe are the advantages of *ſolitude*. The world is a troubled ocean; and who can erect ſtable purpoſes on its fluctating waves? The world is a ſchool of wrong; and who does not feel himſelf warping to its pernicious influences * ? On this ſea of glaſs †, how inſenſibly we ſlide from our own ſtedfaſtneſs! Some ſacred *truth*, which was ſtruck in lively characters on our ſouls, is obſcured, if not obliterated. Some worthy *reſolution*, which heaven had wrought in our breaſts, is ſhaken, if not overthrown. Some enticing *vanity*, which we had ſolemnly renounced, again practiſes its wiles, and again captivates our affections. How often has an unwary glance kindled a fever of irregular deſire in our hearts? How often has a word of applauſe dropt luſcious poiſon into our ears; or ſome diſreſpectful expreſſion raiſed a guſt of paſſion in our boſoms? Our innocence is of ſo *tender* a conſtitution, that it ſuffers in the promiſcuous croud. Our purity is of ſo *delicate* a complexion, that it ſcarce touches on the world, without contracting a ſtain. We ſee, we hear, with peril.

But

* *Nunquam a turba mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid, ex eo quod compoſui, turbatur: aliquio, ex his quæ fugavi, redit. Inimica eſt multorum converſatio.* SENEC.

† Rev. xv. 2

But here *safety* dwells. Every meddling and intrusive avocation is secluded. Silence holds the door against the strife of tongues, and all the impertinencies of idle conversation. The busy swarm of vain images, and cajoling temptations, which beset us, with a buzzing importunity, amidst the gaieties of life, are chased by these thickening shades.—Here I may, without disturbance, commune with my own heart; and learn that best of sciences, to *know myself*. Here the soul may rally her dissipated powers, and grace recover its native energy.—This is the opportunity to rectify every evil impression; to expel the poison, and guard against the contagion, of corrupting examples. This is the place where I may, with advantage, apply myself to subdue the *rebel within;* and be master, not of a sceptre, but of myself.—Throng then, ye ambitious, the levees of the powerful; I will be punctual in my assignations with solitude. To a mind intent upon its own improvement, solitude has charms incomparably more engaging, than the *entertainments* presented in the theatre, or the *honours* conferred in the drawing-room.

I SAID, solitude.—Am I then *alone?*—'Tis true, my acquaintance are at a distance. I have stole away from company, and am remote from all *human* observation.—But that is an alarming thought,

Millions of spiritual *creatures walk the earth,*
Unseen, *both when we wake, and when we sleep* *.

Perhaps, there may be numbers of those *invisible beings*, patrolling this same retreat; and joining with me, in contemplating the Creator's works. Perhaps, those *ministering spirits*, who rejoice at the conversion of a sinner, and hold up the goings of the righteous, may follow us to the lonely recess; and, even in our most

* MILT. *Par. Lost*, b. IV. l. 677.

moſt ſolitary moments, be our conſtant *attendants*.—What a pleaſing awe is awakened by ſuch a reflection! How venerable it renders my retired walks! I am ſtruck with reverence, as under the roof of ſome *ſacred edifice*, or in the *preſence-chamber* of ſome mighty monarch.—O! may I never bring any pride of imagination, nor indulge the leaſt diſſolute affection, where ſuch refined and exalted intelligences exerciſe their watch!

'Tis poſſible, that I am encompaſſed with ſuch a cloud of witneſſes; but it is certain, that GOD, the *infinite eternal* GOD, is now and ever with me. The great JEHOVAH, before whom all the angelic armies bow their heads, and veil their faces, ſurrounds me; ſupports me; pervades me. "In HIM I live, move, "and have my being."—The whole world is his auguſt temple; and, in the moſt ſequeſtered corner, I appear before his adorable Majeſty, no leſs than when I worſhip in his houſe, or kneel at his altar. In every place, therefore, let me pay him the homage of a heart, cleanſed from idols, and devoted to his ſervice. In every circumſtance, let me feel no *ambition*, but to *pleaſe* him; nor covet any *happineſs*, but to *enjoy* him.

How ſublime is the deſcription, and how ſtriking the ſentiment, in that noble paſſage of the pſalms! *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit, or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? If I climb up into* the heights of *heaven, thou art there* inthroned in light. *If I go down to the* depths of the *grave, thou art there alſo* in thy pavilion of darkneſs. *If I retire* to the remoteſt eaſtern climes, *where the morning firſt takes wing: if*, ſwifter than the darting ray, *I* paſs to the oppoſite regions of the weſt, and *remain in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea* *: ſhall I, in *that*

* *Pſal.* cxxxix. 7, 8, 9. There is, I think, an additional ſtrength and beauty in the thought, if, with the learned Mr *Mudge*, we ſuppoſe an *antitheſis* between the two clauſes of the laſt

that distant situation, be beyond thy reach; or, by *this* sudden transition, escape thy notice! So far from it, that could I, with one glance of thought, transport myself beyond all the bounds of creation; I should still be encircled with the immensity of thy essence; or rather, still be inclosed in the hollow of thy hand.—Awful, yet delightful truth! Let it be interwoven with every thought! and become one with the very consciousness of my existence! that I may continually *walk with GOD*, and conduct myself, in every step of my behaviour, "as *seeing HIM that is* "*invisible.*"

They are the happy persons; felicity, true felicity, is *all their own;* who live under an habitual sense of GOD's omnipresence, and a sweet persuasion of his special love. If dangers threaten, their impregnable defence is at hand. Nothing can be so near to terrify, as their Almighty Guardian to secure them.—To these the hours can never be *tedious;* and it is impossible for them to be *alone*. Do they step aside from the occupations of animal life? A more exalted set of employments engage their attention. They address themselves, in all the various acts of devotion, to their heavenly Father; *who* now *sees in secret, and will* hereafter *reward them openly*. They spread all their wants before his indulgent eye, and disburden all their sorrows into his compassionate bosom. Do they withdraw from human society! They find themselves under the more immediate regards of their Maker. If they resign the satisfactions of social intercourse, it is to cultivate a correspondence with the condescending DEITY, and taste the pleasures of divine friendship.

What is such a *state*, but the very suburbs of heaven? What is such a *conduct*, but an antepast of eternal blessedness?

Now,

last verse, as there evidently is between those of the preceding; and that they express, in a poetical style, the extremities of the *east* and the *west*.

Now, my ſoul, the day is *ended*. The hours are all fled. They are fled to the ſupreme Judge, and have given in their evidence; an evidence regiſtered in heaven! and to be produced at the great audit.—Happy *they* whoſe improvement has kept pace with the fleeting minutes; who have ſeized the important fugitives, and engaged them in the purſuit of *wiſdom*, or devoted them to the ſervice of *virtue*.

Fugitives indeed they are. Our moments ſlip away ſilently and inſenſibly. The thief ſteals not more unperceived from the pillaged houſe.—And will the runagates never ſtop? No: where-ever we are, however employed, time purſues his inceſſant courſe. Though *we* are liſtleſs and dilatory; the great meaſurer of our days preſſes on; ſtill preſſes on, in his unwearied career *; and whirls our weeks, and months, and years away.—Is it not then ſurpriſingly ſtrange, to hear people complain of the *tediouſneſs* of their time, and how *heavy* it hangs upon their hands? to ſee them contrive a variety of amuſing artifices, to accelerate its flight, and get rid of its burden?—Ah! thoughtleſs mortals! Why need you urge the headlong torrent? Your days are ſwifter than a *poſt;* which, carrying diſpatches of the laſt importance, with unremitted ſpeed ſcours the road. They paſs away like the nimble *ſhips;* which have the wind in their wings, and ſkim along the watery plain. They haſten to their deſtined period, with the rapidity of an *eagle;* which leaves the ſtormy blaſt behind her, while ſhe cleaves the air, and darts upon her prey †.

Now the day is gone, how *ſhort* it appears! When my

* *Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile tempus.* VIRG.

† *Job* ix. 25. 26. By theſe three very expreſſive images, the inſpired poet repreſents the *unintermitted* and *rapid* flight of time. The paſſage is illuſtrated with great judgment, and equal

my fond eye beheld it in *perſpective*, it ſeemed a very conſiderable ſpace. Minutes crouded upon minutes, and hours ranged behind hours, exhibited an extenſive draught, and flattered me with a long progreſſion of pleaſures. But, upon a *retroſpective* view, how wonderfully is the ſcene altered! The landſcape, large and ſpacious, which a warm fancy drew, brought to the teſt of cool experience, ſhrinks into a ſpan. Juſt as the ſhores vaniſh, and mountains dwindle to a ſpot, when the ſailor, ſurrounded by ſkies and ocean, throws his laſt look on his native land.—How clearly do I now diſcover the cheat! May it never impoſe upon my unwary imagination again! I find, there is nothing abiding on this ſide eternity. A *long* duration, in a ſtate of *finite* exiſtence, is mere illuſion.

Perhaps, the *healthy*, and the *gay*, may not readily credit the ſerious truth; eſpecially from a young pen, and new to its employ. Let us then refer ourſelves to the deciſion of the *ancient*. Aſk ſome venerable old perſon, who is juſt marching off the mortal ſtage, *How many have been the days of the years of thy life*†? It was a monarch's queſtion, and therefore can want no recommendation to the faſhionable world.—Obſerve, how he ſhakes his hoary locks, and from a deep-felt conviction replies; "*Fourſcore years* have finiſh-"ed their rounds, to furrow theſe cheeks, and clothe "this head in ſnow. Such a term may ſeem long and "large to inconſiderate youth. But O! how ſhort, "how ſcanty, to one that has made the experiment! "*Short*, as a gleam of tranſient ſunſhine; *ſcanty*, as "the

equal delicacy, in Dr *Grey*'s moſt ingenious abridgement of *Schultens*.—*Quæ tribus in elementis velociſſima, hic admirabili cum emphaſi congeruntur. In terris, nil pernicius curſore, et quidem læti quid ferente. Rapidius tamen adhuc undas, non ſecant, ſed ſupervolant, navigiola papyro contexta. Omnium rapidiſſime aerem grandibus alis permetitur acquila, præcipiti lapſu ruens in prædam.*

† Gen. xlvii. 8. *Heb. Bib.*

" the ſhadow that departeth. Methinks, it was but " yeſterday that I exchanged my childiſh ſports, for man- " ly exerciſes; and now I am reſigning them both, for " the ſleep of death. As ſoon as we are *born*, we be- " gin to draw to our *end;* and how ſmall is the inter- " val between the cradle and the tomb!"—O; may we believe this teſtimony of mature age! May every evening bring it, with clearer evidence to our minds! And may we form ſuch an eſtimate of the little pittance, while it is upon the advancing hand, as we ſhall certainly make, when the ſands are all run down!

Let me add one reflection on the *work* to be *done* while this ſhuttle is flying through the loom *. A work of no ſmall difficulty, yet of the utmoſt conſequence!—Haſt thou not ſeen, haſt thou not known, the excellent of the earth, who were living images of their Maker? His *divine likeneſs* was transfuſed into their hearts, and beamed forth in all their conduct; beamed forth in meekneſs of wiſdom, and purity of affection; in all the tender offices of love, and all the noble efforts of zeal. To be ſtamped with the ſame beautiful ſignature, and to be followers of them, as they were of CHRIST; *this*, *this* is thy *buſineſs*. On the accompliſhment of this, thy eternal all depends. And will an affair of ſuch unſpeakable weight admit of a moment's delay, or conſiſt with the leaſt remiſſneſs?—Eſpecially, ſince much of thy appointed time is already elapſed; and the remainder is *all uncertainty*, ſave only that it is in the very act to fly.—Or ſuppoſe, thou hadſt made a covenant with the grave, and waſt aſſured of reaching the age of *Methuſelah;* how ſoon would even ſuch a leaſe expire!—Extend it, if you pleaſe, ſtill farther; and let it be *co-exiſtent* with nature itſelf. How inconſiderable is the addition! For yet a very little while, and the commiſſioned archangel lifts up his hand to heaven, and ſwears by the almighty

* *My days are ſwifter than a weaver's ſhuttle.* Job vii. 6.

mighty name, *That time shall be no longer* §. Then *abused* opportunities will never return; and *new* opportunities will never more be offered. Then, should negligent

§ This alludes to the beginning of *Revelations* the xth; which, abstracted from its spiritual meaning, and considered only as a stately *piece* of *machinery*, well deserves our attention; and, I will venture to say, has not its superior, perhaps not its equal, in any of the most celebrated masters of *Greece* and *Rome*.—All that is gloomy or beautiful in the atmosphere all that is striking or magnificent in every element, is taken to heighten the idea. Yet nothing is disproportionate; but an uniform air of ineffable majesty greatens, exalts, ennobles the whole.—Be pleased to observe the *aspect* of this august personage. All the brightness of the sun shines in his countenance; and all the rage of the fire burns in his feet.—See his *apparel*. The clouds compose his robe, and the drapery of the sky floats upon his shoulders. The rainbow forms his diadem; and that which "compasseth the heaven with a glorious circle," is the ornament of his head.—Behold his *attitude*. One foot stands on the ocean, the other rests on the land. The wide-extended earth, and the world of waters, serve as pedestals for those mighty columns.—Consider the *action*. His hand is lifted up to the height of the stars. He speaks; and the regions of the firmament echo with the mighty accents, as the midnight-desert resounds with the lion's roar. The artillery of the skies is discharged at the signal; a peal of sevenfold thunders spreads the alarm, and prepares the universe to receive his orders.—To finish all, and give the highest grandeur, as well as the utmost solemnity, to the representation, hear the *decree* that issues from his mouth. He *swears by HIM* that *liveth for ever and ever*. In whatever manner so majestic a person had expressed himself, he could not fail of commanding universal attention. But when he confirms his speech by a most sacred and inviolable oath, we are not only wrapt in silent suspense, but overwhelmed with the profoundest awe.—He swears, *That time shall be no longer*. Was ever voice so full of terror; so big with wonder? It proclaims, not the fall of empires, but the final period of things. It strikes off the wheels of nature; bids ages and generations cease to roll; and, with one potent word, consigns a whole world over to dissolution.—This is one among a multitude of very sublime and *masterly strokes*, to be found in that too much neglected book—the BIBLE.

negligent mortals wish—wish ever so passionately—for a few hours—a few moments only—to be thrown back from the opening eternity; *thousands* of worlds would not be able to procure the grant.

Shall I now be industrious to shorten what is no longer than a span, or to quicken the pace of what is ever on the wing? Shall I squander away what is *unutterably important*, while it lasts; and, when once departed, is *altogether irrevocable?* O! my soul, forbear the folly; forbear the desperate extravagance. Wilt thou chide as a loiterer, the arrow that boundeth from the string; or sweep away diamonds, as the refuse of thy house?—Throw time away! Astonishing, ruinous, irreparable profuseness! Throw empires away, and be blameless. But O! be parsimonious of thy days; husband thy precious hours. They go connected, indissolubly connected, with heaven or hell *. *Improved*, they are a sure pledge of everlasting glory; *wasted*, they are a sad preface to never-ending confusion and anguish.

WHAT a *profound silence* has composed the world! So profound is the silence, that my very breath seems a noise; the ticking of my watch is distinctly heard; if I do but stir, it creates a disturbance.—There is now none of that confused din from the tumultuous city; no

* I remember to have seen, upon a sun-dial in a physician's garden at *Northampton*, the following *inscription*; which, I think, is the most *proper motto* for the instrument that measures our time, and the most *striking admonition* that can possibly be presented to every eye.

AB HOC MOMENTO PENDET ÆTERNITAS.

The weighty sense of which, I know not how to express in *English*, more happily than in those words of Dr *Watts*:

Good God! on what a *slender thread*
[Or, on what a *moment* of time]
Hang everlasting things!

no voice of jovial ruſtics from the neighbouring meadow; no chirping melody from the ſhady thicket.—Every lip is ſealed. Not the leaſt whiſper invades the air; nor the leaſt motion ruſtles among the boughs. *Echo* herſelf ſleeps unmoleſted. The expanded ear, though all attention, catches no ſound, but the liquid lapſe of a diſtant murmuring ſtream.

All things are huſh'd, as nature's ſelf lay dead.

If, in the midſt of this deep and univerſal compoſure, ten thouſand bellowing thunders ſhould burſt over my head, and rend the ſkies with their united volleys; how ſhould I bear ſo *unexpected* a *ſhock?* It would ſtun my ſenſes, and confound my thoughts. I ſhould ſhudder in every limb; perhaps ſink to the earth with terror.—Conſider then, O mortals! conſider the much more *prodigious* and *amazing* call, which will, ere long, alarm your ſleeping bones. When the tenants of the tomb have ſlumbered, in the moſt undiſturbed repoſe, for a multitude of ages; what an inconceivable conſternation muſt the *ſhout* of the *archangel*, and the *trump* of GOD, occaſion! Will it not wound the ear of the ungodly; and affright, even to diſtraction, the impenitent ſinner? The ſtupendous peal will ſound through the vaſt of heaven; will ſhake the foundations of nature; and pierce even the deepeſt receſſes of the grave. And how—O! how will the priſoners of divine juſtice be able to endure that tremendous *ſummons* to a far more tremendous tribunal? —Do thou, my ſoul, liſten to the *ſtill voice* of the goſpel. Attend, in this thy day, to the gracious invitations of thy Saviour. Then ſhall that great midnight-cry loſe its *horror*, and be *muſic* in thy ears. It ſhall be welcome to thy reviving clay, as the tidings of liberty to the dungeon-captive; as the year of jubilee to the haraſſed ſlave. This, this ſhall be its charming import; "*Awake, and ſing, ye that dwell in duſt* *. WHAT

* Iſ. xxvi. 19.

WHAT a general *ceſſation* of *affairs* has this duſky hour introduced! A little while ago, all was hurry, hurry. Life and activity exerted themſelves in a thouſand buſy forms. The city ſwarmed with paſſing and repaſſing multitudes. All the country was ſweat and duſt. The air floated in perpetual agitation, by the flitting birds, and humming bees. *Art* ſat prying with her piercing eyes; while *Induſtry* plied her reſtleſs hands.—But ſee, how all this fervent and impetuous buſtle is fled with the ſetting ſun. The beaſts are ſunk to their graſſy couch; and the winged people are retired to their downy neſts. The hammer has reſigned its ſounding taſk, and the file ceaſes to repeat its flying touches. Shut is the well-frequented ſhop, and its threſhold no longer worn by the feet of numerous cuſtomers. The village-ſwain lyes drowned in ſlumbers; and even his truſty dog, who, for a conſiderable time, ſtood centry at the door, is extended at his eaſe, and ſnores with his maſter.—In every place *Toil* reclines her head, and *Application* folds her arms. All intereſts ſeem to be forgot; all purſuits are ſuſpended; all employment is ſunk away, ſunk away with thoſe fluttering myriads, which lately ſported in the ſun's departing rays.—'Tis like the ſabbath of univerſal nature; or as tho' the pulſe of life ſtood ſtill.

Thus will it be with our infinitely momentous concerns, when once *the ſhadows of the evening* (that long evening which follows the footſteps of death!) *are ſtretched over us*. The dead cannot ſeek unto GOD; the living, the living alone, are poſſeſſed of this ineſtimable opportunity *. "There is no work or de-
"vice, no repentance or amendment, in the grave †,
" whither

* *Behold! now is the accepted time. Behold!* now *is the day of ſalvation.* 2 Cor. vi. 2.

Haſte, haſte, he lyes in wait, he's at the door,
Inſidious death! ſhou'd his ſtrong hand arreſt,
No compoſition ſets the pris'ner free.

† They who are gone down to the grave, are repreſented

(*If*

" whither we all are hasting." When once that *closing scene* is advanced, we shall have no other part to act on this *earthly theatre*. Then, the sluggard, who has slumbered away life in a criminal inactivity, must lye down in hopeless distress, and everlasting sorrow. Then that awful doom will take place, " He that is " *holy*, let him be holy still; and he that is *filthy*, let " him be filthy for ever."

Is it so, my soul? Is this the *only*, *only* time allotted for obtaining the great reward, and making thy salvation sure? And art thou lulled in a *vain security*, or dreaming in a *supine inadvertency?* Start, O! start from thy trance. Gird up the loins of thy mind, and work while it is day. Improve the present seed-time, that eternity may yield a joyful harvest.—We especially, who are watchmen in *Israel*, and ministers of the glorious gospel; may *we* be awakened, by this consideration, to all assiduity in our holy office. Some or other of *our people* are ever and anon departing into the invisible state; all *our friends* are making incessant approaches

(*Is.* xxxviii. 11.) by the phrase, חדלי שבת —rendered by *Vitringa*, *Those that inhabit the* land of *intermission* or *cessation.* —Which prevents all appearance of *tautology* in the sentence; and is, I think, a valuable *improvement* of the translation; as it conveys an idea, not only distinct from the preceding, but of a very poetical and very affecting nature; such as was perfectly natural for the royal singer, and royal sufferer to dwell upon, in his desponding moments.—Thus interpreted the sense will run; " *I shall see man no more;* I shall be cut off from " the chearful ways of men, and all the sweets of human so- " ciety. And, what is a farther aggravation of the threaten- " ed stroke, *I shall*, by its taking place, *be* numbered *with* " *those that inherit the land of cessation* and inactivity; where " there will be no more possibility of contributing to the hap- " piness of my kingdom, no more opportunity of advancing " my Creator's glory, or of making my own final salvation " sure."—A sentiment like *this* is grand, important, and full of benevolence; removes all suspicion of unbecoming *pusillanimity*, and does the highest *honour* to the monarch's character.

proaches to their long home; and we *ourselves* shall very shortly be transmitted to the confinement of the tomb. *This* is the favourable juncture, wherein alone we can contribute to their endless welfare. This is the crisis, the all-important *crisis*, of their final felicity. Instantly, therefore, let us pour in our wholesome instructions; instantly let us ply them with our earnest exhortations. A moment's delay may be an irreparable loss; may be irretrievable ruin. While we procrastinate, a fatal stroke may intervene; and place *us* beyond the power of administering, or place *them* beyond all possibility of receiving, any spiritual good *.

How frequently is the face of nature *changed!* and, by changing, made more *agreeable!*—The long-continued glitter of the day, renders the soothing shades of the evening doubly welcome. Nor does the morn ever purple the east with so engaging a lustre, as after the gloom of a dark and dismal night.—At present, a *calm* of tranquillity is spread through the universe. The weary winds have forgot to blow. The gentle gales have fanned themselves asleep. Not so much as a single leaf nods. Even the quivering aspin rests. *And not one breath curls o'er the stream.*—Sometimes, on the contrary, the *tempest* summons all the forces of the air; and pours itself, with resistless fury, from the angry north. The whole atmosphere is tossed into tumultuous confusion, and the watery world is heaved to the clouds. The astonished mariner, and his straining vessel, now scale the rolling mountain, and hang dreadfully visible on the broken surge; now shoot,

* The case represented by the prophet (1 *Kings* xx. 40.) seems perfectly applicable on this occasion. *As thy servant was busy here and there, he was gone.* So, while we are either *remiss* in our function, or laying ourselves out upon *inferior* cares, the people of our charge may be gone;—gone beyond the influence of our counsels, beyond the reach of our prayers;—gone into the *unchangeable* and eternal state.

ſhoot, with headlong impetuoſity, into the yawning gulf; and neither hulk nor maſt is ſeen. The ſtorm ſweeps over the continent; raves along the city-ſtreets; ſtruggles through the foreſt-boughs; and terrifies the ſavage nations with a howl, more wildly horrid than their own. The knotty oaks bend before the blaſt; their iron trunks groan; and their ſtubborn limbs are daſhed to the ground. The lofty dome rocks; and even the ſolid tower totters on its baſis.

Such variations are kindly contrived, and with an evident condeſcenſion to the fickleneſs of our taſte. Becauſe a perpetual repetition of the *ſame* objects would create ſatiety and *diſguſt;* therefore the indulgent Father of our race has diverſified the univerſal ſcene, and bid every appearance bring with it the charm of novelty.—This circumſtance is *beneficial*, as well as *entertaining*. Providence, ever gracious to mortals, ever intent upon promoting our felicity, has taken care to mingle, in the conſtitution of things, what is pleaſing to our imagination, with what is ſerviceable to our intereſts. The piercing winds, and rugged aſpect of winter, render the balmy gales, and flowery ſcenes of ſpring, peculiarly delightful. At the ſame time, the keen froſts mellow the ſoil, and prepare it for the hand of Induſtry. The ruſhing rains impregnate the glebe, and fit it to become a magazine of plenty. The earth is a great *laboratory;* and *December*'s cold collects the groſs materials, which are *ſublimated* by the refining warmth of *May*. The air is a pure elaſtic fluid; and were it always to remain in *this* motionleſs ſerenity, it would loſe much of its active ſpring; was it never agitated by *thoſe* wholeſome concuſſions, it would contract a noiſome, perhaps, a peſtilential taint. In which caſes, our reſpiration, inſtead of purifying, would corrupt the vital juices; inſtead of ſupplying us with refreſhment, would be a ſource of diſeaſes; or every gaſp we draw, might be unavoidable

able death *.—How then ſhould we admire, how ſhould we adore, that happy union of benignity and wiſdom; which, from a *variety* of diſpenſations, produces an *uniformity* of good? produces a perpetual ſucceſſion of delights, and an uninterrupted ſeries of advantages!

The *darkneſs* is now at its height; and I cannot but admire the obliging manner of its taking place. It comes not with a blunt and abrupt incivility, but makes gentle and reſpectful advances. A *precipitate* tranſition, from the ſplendors of day, to all the horrors of midnight, would be inconvenient and frightful. It would bewilder the traveller in his journey; it would ſtrike the creation with amazement; and, perhaps, be pernicious to the organs of ſight. Therefore the gloom ruſhes not upon us inſtantaneouſly, but increaſes by ſlow degrees: and, ſending *twilight* before as its *harbinger*, decently advertiſes us of its approach. By this means, we are neither alarmed, nor incommoded, by the change; but are able to take all ſuitable and timely meaſures for its reception.—Thus graciouſly has Providence regulated, not only the *grand*

* Conſidering the immenſe quantity of coals, and other combuſtible materials, which are daily conſumed, and evaporate into the air; conſidering the numberleſs ſteams, and clouds of ſmoke, which almoſt continually overwhelm populous cities;—the noiſome exhalations, which ariſe from thronged infirmaries and loathſome jails, from ſtagnating lakes and putrid fens;—the variety of offenſive and unwholeſome effluvia, which proceed from other cauſes;—it is a very remarkable inſtance of a Providence, at once tenderly kind, and infinitely powerful, that mankind is not *ſuffocated* with ſtench; that the air is not *choked* with filth.—The air is the *common ſewer*, into which ten thouſand times ten thouſand nuiſances are inceſſantly diſcharged; yet it is preſerved ſo *thoroughly clear*, as to afford the moſt tranſparent medium for viſion; ſo *delicately undulatory*, as to tranſmit, with all imaginable diſtinctneſs, every diverſity of ſound; ſo *perfectly pure*, as to be the conſtant refiner of the fluids, in every animal that breathes.

grand viciſſitudes of the ſeaſons, but alſo the *common interchanges* of light and darkneſs, with an apparent reference to our comfort.

Now the fierce *inhabitants* of the *foreſt* forſake their dens. A thouſand grim forms, a thouſand growling monſters, pace the deſert. Death is in their jaws, while, ſtung with hunger, and athirſt for blood, they roam their nightly rounds.—Unfortunate the *traveller*, who is overtaken by the night, in thoſe diſmal wilds! How muſt he ſtand aghaſt at the mingled yell of ravenous throats, and lions roaring after their prey! Defend him, propitious heaven! or elſe he muſt ſee his endearing ſpouſe, and hail his native home, no more!—Now the prowling wolf, like a murderous ruffian, dogs the ſhepherd's footſteps, and beſets his bleating charge. The fox, like a crafty felon, ſteals to the thatched cottages, and carries off the feathered booty.

Happy for the world, were theſe the only deſtroyers that walk in darkneſs. But, alas! there are ſavages in human ſhape, who muffled in ſhades, infeſt the abodes of civilized life. The ſons of *violence* make choice of this ſeaſon *, to perpetrate the moſt outrageous acts of wrong and robbery. The *adulterer* waiteth for the twilight; and, baſer than the villain on the highway, betrays the honour of his boſom-friend. Now *Faction* forms her cloſe cabals, and whiſpers her traiterous inſinuations. Now *Rebellion* plans her accurſed plots, and prepares the train to blow a nation into ruin. Now crimes which hide their odious heads in the day, haunt the ſeats of ſociety, and ſtalk thro' the gloom with audacious front. Now the *vermin* of the *ſtews* crawl from their lurking-holes, to wallow in ſin, and ſpread contagion through the night:

* ——— When night
Darkens the ſtreets, then wander forth the ſons
Of *Belial*, flown with inſolence and wine. MILT.

night: each soothing himself with the fond notion, that all is safe; that no eye sees.

Are they then concealed? Preposterous madmen! to draw the curtain between their infamous practices, and a little set of mortals; but lay them open to all these chaste and *wakeful eyes* of heaven *! as though the moon and stars were made to light men to their revels, and not to GOD.—Are they then concealed? No, truly. Was every one of these vigilant luminaries closed; an eye *keener* than the lightning's flash, an eye *brighter* than ten thousand suns, beholds their every motion. Their thickest shades are beaming day †, to the jealous Inspector, and supreme Judge of human actions.—Deluded creatures! have ye not heard, have ye not read, "that clouds and darkness "are HIS majestic residence ‡?" In that very gloom, to which you fly for covert, he erects his throne. What you reckon your *screen*, is the bar of his tribunal. O! remember this! stand in awe, and sin not. Remember, that the great and terrible GOD *is about your path* ‖, when you take your midnight-range; is *about your bed*, when you indulge the loose desire; *and spies out all your ways*, be they ever so secretly conducted, or artfully disguised.

SOME

* — — *Sed luna videt, sed sidera testes*
Intendunt oculos.

† This is finely, and very forcibly expressed by the psalmist: *If I say, Peradventure the darkness shall cover me; then shall my night be turned to day:* or, as it may be rendered somewhat more emphatically, *Even the night shall be broad daylight all around me.* Psal. cxxxix. 10.

‡ Psal. xcvii. 2.

‖ The original words are much stronger than the translation, זרית and חפנותה signify, Thou *siftest* my path, and art *intimately acquainted with* all my ways: the former, I apprehend, denoting the *exact* cognisance which the Almighty taketh, the latter implying the *constant* inspection which he exerciseth, over all the circumstances of our conduct. *Psal.* cxxxix. 2.

SOME minutes ago, a paſſenger croſſed along the road. His horſe's foot ſtruck the ground, and fetched fire from a flint. My eye, tho' at a diſtance, catched the view; and ſaw, with *great clearneſs*, the tranſient ſparkles: of which, had I been ever ſo near, I ſhould not have diſcerned the *leaſt glimpſe*, under the blaze of day.—So *, when ſickneſs has drawn a *veil* over the gaiety of our hearts; when misfortunes have eclipſed the ſplendor of our outward circumſtances; how many *important convictions* preſent themſelves with the brighteſt evidence! Under the ſunſhine of proſperity, they lay undiſcovered; but, when ſome intervening cloud has darkened the ſcene, they emerge from their obſcurity, and even glitter upon our minds. Then, the *world*, that deluſive cheat, confeſſes her emptineſs: but JESUS, the bright and Morning-ſtar, beams forth with inimitable luſtre. Then, *vice* loſes all her fallacious allurements; that painted ſtrumpet is horrible, as the hags of hell: but *virtue*, deſpiſed virtue, gains lovelineſs from a louring providence, and treads the ſhades with more than mortal charms.—May this reconcile me, and all the *ſons* of *ſorrow*, to our appointed ſhare of ſuffering! If tribulation tend to diſſipate the inward darkneſs, and pour heavenly day upon our minds; welcome diſtreſs; welcome diſappointment; welcome whatever our froward fleſh

* I beg leave to inform the *young gentleman*, whoſe name dignifies my dedication, that *this* was a remark of his honoured *father*, when we rode together, and converſed in a duſky evening. I mention this circumſtance, partly to ſecure the paragraph from contempt; partly to give him, and the world, an idea of that eminently ſerious taſte which diſtinguiſhed my deceaſed friend.—The *leſs obvious* the reflection, the more clearly it diſcovers a turn of mind remarkably ſpiritual; which would ſuffer nothing to eſcape, without yielding ſome religious improvement. The *meaner* the incident, the more admirable was that fertility of imagination, which could deduce the ſubliméſt truths from the moſt trivial occurrences.

or peeviſh paſſions, would *miſcall* calamities. *Theſe light afflictions, which are but for a moment*, ſhall ſit eaſy upon our ſpirits; ſince they befriend our knowledge; promote our faith; and ſo "*work out for us* "*a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory**."

How has this darkneſs ſnatched every ſplendid and graceful object from my ſight! It has daſhed the ſponge over the pictures of ſpring, and deſtroyed all the *delicate diſtinctions* of things. Where are now the fine tinges, which ſo lately charmed me from the glowing parterre? The bluſh is ſtruck out from the cheeks of the roſe, and the ſnowy hue is dropt from the lily. I caſt my eyes toward a magnificent ſeat; but the aſpiring columns, and fair-expanded front, are mingled in rude confuſion. Without the ſun, all the elegance of the blooming world is a *mere blank*; all the ſymmetry of architecture is a *ſhapeleſs heap*.

Is not this an expreſſive emblem of the lovelineſs, which the *Sun* of *Righteouſneſs* transfuſes into all that is amiable? Was it not for JESUS, and his merits; I ſhould ſigh with anguiſh of ſpirit; even while I rove thro' ranks of the moſt beautiful flowers, or breathe amidſt a wilderneſs of ſweets. Was it not for JESUS, and his merits; I ſhould roam like ſome *diſconſolate ſpectre*,

* 2 *Cor.* iv. 17. The great *Stephens*, that oracle of *Grecian* learning, tranſlates καθ' υπερβολην *Quo nihil majus dici aut fingi poteſt*. But how does the ſenſe riſe! how is the idea enlarged, under *two* ſuch forcible expreſſions! καθ' υπερβολην εις υπερβολην.—The whole verſe is a maſterpiece of the beautiful *antitheſis*, the lively *deſcription*, and the nervous *diction*. It is one of thoſe exquiſite paſſages in the inſpired writings, which, like ſome rich *aromatic plants*, cannot be transferred from their own generous and native ſoil, without being impaired in their vivacity, and loſing much of their delicacy. Perhaps, the following verſion may be ſomewhat leſs injurious to the ſacred original, than the common tranſlation:—*Our very light affliction, which is but juſt for the preſent moment, worketh out a far more exceeding, an incomparably great, and eternal weight of glory.*

ſpectre, even through the ſmiles of creation, and the careſſes of fortune. My converſation in this world, though dreſſed in the moſt engaging forms of external pleaſure, would be like the paſſage of a *condemned malefactor*, through enamelled meadows, and bowers of bliſs, to be broke upon the wheel, or to expire on the rack. But a daily reflection on the LAMB's atoning blood; a comfortable truſt, that my ſoul is reconciled thro' this divine expiation; this is the ray, the golden ray, which irradiates the face of the univerſe. This is the *oil* of *beauty*, which makes all things wear a chearful aſpect; and the *oil* of *gladneſs*, which diſpoſes the ſpectator to behold them with delight *. This, this is the ſecret charm, which teaches nature, in all her proſpects and all her productions, ſo exquiſitely to pleaſe.

"MAN goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, "till the evening." But then his ſtrength fails; his ſpirits flag; and he ſtands in need, not only of ſome reſpite from toil, but of ſome kindly and ſovereign refreſhments.—What an admirable proviſion for this purpoſe is *ſleep!* Sleep introduces a moſt welcome vacation,

* Thus applied, that fine piece of *flattery*, addreſſed to the *Heathen* emperor, is ſtrictly and literally *true*.

——————*Vultus ubi tuus*
Affulſit populo, gratior it dies,
Et ſoles melius nitent. HORAT.

Which I would caſt in a *Chriſtian* mould, and thus tranſlate:

When faith preſents the Saviour's death,
And whiſpers, "This is thine;"
Sweetly my riſing hours advance,
And peacefully decline.

While ſuch my views, the radiant ſun
Sheds a more ſprightly ray;
Each object ſmiles; all nature charms:
I ſing my cares away.

cation, both for the soul and body. The exercises of the brain, and the labours of the hand, are at once discontinued. So that the *weary* limbs repair their exhausted vigour; while the *pensive* thoughts drop their load of sorrows, and the *busy* ones rest from the fatigue of application.—Most reviving cordial! equally beneficial to our animal and intellectual powers. It supplies the fleshly machine, and keeps all its nice movements in a proper posture for easy play. It animates the thinking faculties with fresh alacrity, and rekindles their ardor for the studies of the dawn. Without these enlivening recruits, how soon would the most robust constitution be wasted into a *walking skeleton*; and the most learned sage degenerate into a *hoary idiot!*—Some time ago, I beheld, with surprise, poor *Florio*. His air was wild; his countenance meagre; his thoughts roving, and speech disconcerted. Inquiring the cause of this strange alteration, I was informed, that, for several nights, he had not closed his eyes in sleep. For want of which *noble restorative*, that sprightly youth (who was once the life of the discourse, and the darling of the company) is become a spectacle of misery and horror.

How many of my fellow-creatures are, at this very instant, confined to the bed of languishing; and complaining with that illustrious sufferer of old, *Wearisome nights are appointed to me* ‖*!* Instead of indulging soft repose, they are counting the tedious hours; telling every striking clock; or measuring the very moments, by their throbbing pulse. How many, harassed with *pain*, most passionately long to make some little truce with their agonies, in peaceful slumbers! How many, sick with *disquietude*, and restless even on their downy pillows, would purchase this transient oblivion of their woes, almost at any rate!—That which wealth cannot procure, which multitudes sigh for in vain, thy GOD has

* Job vii. 3.

has beſtowed on thee, times out of number. The *welcome viſitant*, punctual at the needed hour, has entered thy chamber, and poured his poppies round thy couch; has gently cloſed thy eye-lids, and ſhed his ſlumberous dews over all thy ſenſes.

Since ſleep is ſo abſolutely neceſſary, ſo ineſtimably valuable, obſerve, what a *fine apparatus* almighty goodneſs has made, to accommodate us with the balmy bleſſing. With how kind a precaution he removes whatever might obſtruct its acceſs, or impede its influence! He draws around us the *curtain* of *darkneſs*; which inclines us to a drowſy indolence, and conceals every object that might too ſtrongly agitate the ſenſe. He conveys *peace* into our *apartments*; and impoſes ſilence on the whole creation. Every animal is bidden to tread ſoftly, or rather to ceaſe from its motion, when man is retiring to his repoſe.—May we not diſcern, in this gracious diſpoſition of things, the tender cares of a *nurſing-mother*; who huſhes every noiſe, and ſecludes every diſturbance, when ſhe has laid the child of her love to reſt? *So*, by ſuch ſoothing circumſtances, and gently-working opiates, *HE giveth, to his beloved, ſleep* *.

Another ſignal inſtance of a providence intent upon our welfare, is, that we are preſerved *ſafe* in the hours of *ſlumber*. How are we then loſt to all apprehenſion of danger, even though the murderer be at our bed-ſide, or his naked ſword at our breaſt! Deſtitute of all concern for ourſelves, we are unable to *think of*, much more to *provide* for, our own ſecurity. At theſe moments, therefore, we lie open to innumerable perils; perils from the reſiſtleſs rage of flames; perils from the inſidious artifices of thieves, or the outrageous violence of robbers; perils from the *irregular workings* ‡ of our own thoughts, and eſpecially from the incurſions of our ſpiritual enemy.

What

* Pſal. cxxvii. 2.

‡ I think, it is referable only to a ſuperintending and watchful

What a dreadful miſchief might that reſtleſs, that implacable *adverſary* of *mankind* work, was there not an inviſible hand to control his rage, and protect poor mortals! What ſcenes of horror might he repreſent to our imaginations, and "ſcare us with dreams, or "terrify us with viſions *!" But the *Keeper* of *Iſrael*, who

ful *providence*, that we are not hurried into the moſt *pernicious* actions, when our imagination is heated, and our reaſon ſtupefied by dreams.—We have ſometimes heard of unfortunate perſons, who, walking in their ſleep, have thrown themſelves headlong from a window, and been daſhed to death on the pebbles. And whence is it, that ſuch diſaſtrous accidents are only *related* as pieces of news, not experienced by ourſelves, or our families? Were *our* minds more ſober in their operations, or more circumſpect in their regards? No, verily: nothing could be more wild than their excurſions; and none could be more inattentive to their own welfare. Therefore, if *we have laid us down, and ſlept* in peace; it was, becauſe the LORD vouchſafed us the ſweet refreſhment; if *we roſe again* in ſafety, it was, *becauſe the LORD ſuſtained us* with his unremitted protection.

Will the candid reader excuſe me, if I add a ſhort ſtory, or rather a *matter* of *fact*, ſuitable to the preceding remark?—Two perſons, who had been hunting together in the day, ſlept together the following night. One of them was renewing the purſuit in his dream; and, having run the whole circle of the chace, came, at laſt, to the fall of the ſtag. Upon this, he cries out with a determined ardor, *I'll kill him, I'll kill him;* and immediately feels for the knife, which he carried in his pocket. His companion happening to be awake, and obſerving wat paſſed, leaped from the bed. Being ſecure from danger, and the moon ſhining into the room, he ſtood to view the event. When, to his inexpreſſible ſurpriſe, the infatuated ſportſman gave ſeveral deadly ſtabs, in the very place, where, a moment before, the throat and the life of his friend lay.—This I mention, as a proof, that nothing hinders us, even from being aſſaſſins of *others*, or murderers of *ourſelves*, amidſt the mad ſallies of ſleep; only the *preventing care* of our heavenly Father.

* What a complete maſter that malignant ſpirit is in exhibiting *viſionary repreſentations*, appears from his conduct towards CHRIST,

who never ſlumbers nor ſleeps, interpoſes in our behalf; at once to *cheriſh* us under his wings, and to *defend* us as with a ſhield.—It is ſaid of *Solomon*, "That threeſcore valiant men were about his bed; all "expert in war; every one with his ſword upon his "thigh, becauſe of fear in the night §." But one greater than *Solomon*, one mightier than myriads of armed hoſts; even the great JEHOVAH, in whom is everlaſting ſtrength, he vouchſafes to *encamp about our houſes*, to watch over our ſleeping minutes, and to ſtop all the avenues of ill.—O! the unwearied and condeſcending goodneſs of our Creator! who *lulls* us to our *reſt*, by bringing on the ſilent ſhades; and *plants* his own ever-watchful eye as our *centinel*, while we enjoy the needful repoſe.

REASON, now, reſigns her ſedate office; and *Fancy*, extravagant fancy, leads the mind through a maze of vanity. The head is crouded with falſe images, and tantalized with the moſt ridiculous miſapprehenſions of things. Some are expatiating amidſt *Fairy-fields*, and gathering garlands of viſionary bliſs; while their bodies are ſtretched on a wiſp of ſtraw, and ſheltered by the cobwebs of a barn. Others, quite inſenſible of their rooms of ſtate, are mourning in a doleful *dungeon*, or ſtruggling with the raging billows. Perhaps, with haſty ſteps, they climb the craggy cliff; and, with real anxiety, fly from the imaginary danger. Or elſe, benumbed with ſudden fear, and finding themſelves unable to eſcape, they give up at once their hopes and their efforts; and, tho' reclined on a couch of ivory, are ſinking, all helpleſs and diſtreſſed, in the furious whirlpool. So unaccountable are the *vagaries* of the *brain*,

§ CHRIST, on the high mountain: and that he is too ready, if not reſtrained by an over-ruling power, to employ his dexterity in *afflicting mankind*, is evident from his treatment of *Job*. See *Luke* iv. 5. *Job* vii. 14. § Cant. iii. 7. 8.

brain, while sleep maintains its dominion over the limbs!

But is this the only season, when absurd and incoherent irregularities play their magic on our minds? Are there not those who *dream*, even in their *waking* moments!—Some pride themselves in a notion of superior excellency, because the royal favour has annexed a few splendid titles to their names; or because the dying silkworm has bequeathed her finest threads to cover their nakedness.—Others congratulate their own signal happiness, because loads of golden lumber are amassed together in their coffers; or promise themselves a most superlative felicity indeed, when some thousands more are added to the useless heap.—Nor are there wanting others, who gape after *substantial* satisfaction from *airy* applause; and flatter themselves with, I know not what, immortality in the momentary buz of renown.—Are any of these a whit more reasonable in their opinions, than the poor ragged wretch in his reveries; who, while snoring under a hedge, exults in the possession of his stately palace, and sumptuous furniture?—If persons, who are *very vassals* to their own *domineering* passions, and led captive by numberless temptations; if these persons pique themselves with a conceit of their liberty, and fancy themselves the *generous* and *gallant* spirits of the age: where is the difference between theirs, and the madman's frenzy; who, tho' chained to the floor, is throned in thought, and wielding an imaginary sceptre?—In a word, as many as borrow their dignity from a plume of feathers, or the gaudy trappings of Fortune; as many as send their souls to seek for bliss in the blandishments of sense, or in any thing short of the divine favour, and a well-grounded hope of the incorruptible inheritance *; what are they but dreamers with their eyes open; *delirious*, tho' in *health*?

Would

* These give a sacred, and home-felt delight,
A *sober certainty* of *waking* bliss. MILT. *Comus*.

Would you see their picture drawn to the very life, and the success of their schemes calculated with the utmost exactness; cast your eye upon that fine representation exhibited by the prophet: *It shall be even as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold, he drinketh; but he awaketh, and behold he is faint, and his soul hath appetite* *. Such is the race, and such the prize, of all those candidates for honour and joy, who run wide from the mark of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS. They live in vanity, and die in wo.—Awaken us, merciful LORD, from these *noon-tide trances!* Awaken us, while conviction may turn to our advantage, and not serve only to increase our torment. O! let our "eyes be enlightened, to discern the things that are "excellent;" and no longer be imposed upon by fantastic appearances, which, however *pompous* they may seem, will prove more *empty* than the visions of the night, more *transient* than the dream that is forgotten.

HAVING mentioned sleep and dreams, let me once again consider those remarkable incidents of our frame; so very remarkable, that I may venture to call them a kind of experimental *mystery*, and little less than a standing *miracle*.—Behold the most *vigorous constitution* when stretched on the bed of ease, and totally resigned to the slumbers of the night. Its activity is oppressed with fetters of indolence; its strength is consigned over to a temporary annihilation; the nerves are like a bow unstrung, and the whole animal system is like a motionless log.—Behold a person of the most *delicate sensations*, and *amiable dispositions*. His eyes, though thrown wide open, admit not the visual ray; at least, distinguish not objects. His ears, with the organs unimpaired, and articulate accents beating upon the drum, perceive not the sound; at least, apprehend not the meaning.

* Is. xxix. 8.

meaning. The ſenſes, and their exquiſitely fine feelings, are overwhelmed with an unaccountable ſtupefaction. You call him a *ſocial* creature; but where are his ſocial affections? He knows not the father that begat him, and takes no notice of the friend that is as his own ſoul. The wife of his boſom may expire by his ſide, and he lye more unconcerned than a barbarian. The children of his body may be tortured with the ſevereſt pangs; and he, even in the ſame chamber, remain untouched with the leaſt commiſeration.—Behold the moſt *ingenious ſcholar;* whoſe judgment is piercing, and able to trace the moſt intricate difficulties of ſcience; his taſte refined, and quick to reliſh all the beauties of ſentiment and compoſition. Yet, at this juncture, the thinking faculties are unhinged, and the intellectual œconomy quite diſconcerted. Inſtead of cloſe-connected reaſonings, nothing but a diſjointed huddle of abſurd ideas; inſtead of well-digeſted principles, nothing but a diſorderly jumble of crude conceptions. The moſt palpable deluſions impoſe upon his imagination. The whole night paſſes, and he frequently miſtakes it for a ſingle minute; is not ſenſible of the tranſition, hardly ſenſible of any duration.

Yet, no ſooner does the morning dawn, and daylight enter the room; but this ſtrange inchantment vaniſhes. The man awakes, and finds himſelf poſſeſſed of all the valuable endowments, which, for ſeveral hours were ſuſpended, or loſt. His ſinews are braced, and fit for action. His ſenſes are alert, and keen. The romantic viſionary brightens into the maſter of reaſon. The frozen or benumbed affections melt with tenderneſs, and glow with benevolence. And, what is beyond meaſure ſurpriſing, the intoxicated mind works itſelf ſober, not by *ſlow degrees;* but, in the *twinkling* of an eye, recovers from its perturbation.—Why does not the ſtupor which deadens all the nice operations of the animal powers, hold faſt its poſſeſſion? When the thoughts are once diſadjuſted, why are they

not

not always in confusion? How is it, that they are rallied in a moment; and, from the wildest irregularity, reduced to the most orderly array?—From an inactivity resembling death, how is the body so *suddenly* restored to vigour and agility? From extravagancies bordering upon madness; how is the understanding *instantaneously* re-established in sedateness and harmony?—Surely, "this is the LORD's doing, and it should "be marvellous in our eyes;" should awaken our gratitude, and inspirit our praise.

THIS is the time in which *ghosts* are supposed to make their appearance. Now the *timorous imagination* teems with phantoms, and creates numberless terrors to itself. Now dreary forms, in sullen state, stalk along the gloom; or, swifter than lightning, glide across the shades. Now voices more than mortal * are heard from the echoing vaults, and groans issue from the hollow tombs. Now melancholy spectres visit the ruins of ancient monasteries, and frequent the solitary dwellings of the dead. They pass and repass, in unsubstantial images, along the forsaken galleries; or take their determined stand over some lamented grave.—How often has the school-boy fetched a long circuit, and trudged many a needless step, in order to avoid the haunted church-yard? Or, if necessity, sad necessity, has obliged him to cross the spot, where *human skulls* are lodged below, and the *baleful yews* shed supernumerary horrors above; a thousand hideous stories rush into his memory. Fear adds wings to his feet; he scarce touches the ground; dares not once look behind him; and blesses his good fortune, if no frightful sound purred at his heels, if no ghastly shape bolted upon his sight.

'Tis strange to observe the excessive timidity which possesses

* *Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita silentes*
Ingens, et simulacra modis pallentia miris
Visa sub obscurum noctis.— VIRG.

poſſeſſes many people's minds, on this *fanciful occaſion*; while they are void of all concern, on others of the moſt *tremendous import*. Thoſe who are ſtartled, in any dark and lonely walk, at the *very apprehenſion* of a ſingle ſpectre, are nevertheleſs unimpreſſed at the ſure *proſpect* of entering into a whole world of diſembodied beings; nay, are without any emotions of awe, tho' they know themſelves to be haſtening into the preſence of the great, infinite, and eternal Spirit. —Should ſome pale meſſenger from the regions of the dead, draw back our curtains at the hour of midnight; and, appointing ſome particular place, ſay, as the horrid apparition to *Brutus*, *I'll meet thee there* *; I believe the boldeſt heart would feel ſomething like a panic; would ſeriouſly think upon the adventure, and be in pain for the event. But, when a voice from heaven cries, in the awakening language of the prophet, *Prepare to meet thy God, O Iſrael* †; how little is the warning regarded! how ſoon is it forgot! Prepoſterous ſtupidity! to be *utterly unconcerned*, where it is the trueſt wiſdom to take the alarm; and to be *all trepidation*, where there is nothing really terrible!—Do thou, my ſoul, remember thy Saviour's admonition; "*I will forewarn you, whom you ſhall fear*. Fear not "theſe imaginary horrors of the night: but fear that "awful Being, whoſe revelation of himſelf, tho' with "expreſſions of peculiar mercy, made *Moſes*, his fa"vourite ſervant, tremble exceedingly: whoſe mani"feſtation, when he appears with purpoſes of inexo"rable vengeance, will make *mighty conquerors*, who "were familiar with dangers, and eſtranged to diſmay, "call upon the mountains to fall on them, and the "rocks to cover them: the menace of whoſe majeſtic eye,

* The ſtory of *Brutus*, and his *evil genius*, is well known. Nor muſt it be denied, that the preciſe words of the ſpectre to the hero were, *I'll meet thee at* Philippi. But as this would not anſwer my purpoſe, I was obliged to make an alteration in the circumſtance of *place*.

† Amos iv. 12.

" eye, when he comes attended with thouſand thou-
" ſands of his immortal hoſts, will make the very
" heavens cleave aſunder, and the earth flee away.—
" O! dread HIS diſpleaſure; ſecure HIS favour; and
" then thou mayſt commit all thy other anxieties to
" the wind; thou mayſt laugh at every other fear."

This brings to my mind a memorable and amazing occurrence, recorded in the book of *Job* * : which is, I think, no inconſiderable proof of the *real exiſtence* of apparitions †, on ſome *very extraordinary* emergencies; while it diſcountenances thoſe legions of idle tales, which ſuperſtition has raiſed, and credulity received. Since it teaches us, that if, at any time, thoſe viſitants from the unknown world render themſelves perceivable by mortals, it is not upon any errand of frivolous conſequence,

* Job iv. 12, 14, &c.

† *Is a proof of the real exiſtence of apparitions*,—if the ſenſe, in which I have always underſtood this paſſage, be true.—*Eliphaz*, I apprehend, was neither in a trance, nor in a dream, but perfectly awake.—Though he ſpeaks of ſleep; he ſpeaks of it, as fallen not upon *himſelf*, but upon *other* men. He does not mention *dreams*, though חלומות *ſomnia*, would have ſuited the verſe (if the book be in metre) altogether as well as חזיונות *viſiones*.—It could not ſurely be a *wind*, as ſome tranſlate the word רוח. Becauſe the circumſtances of *ſtanding ſtill* is not ſo compatible with the nature of a wind; and a wind would have paſſed *above* him, all *around* him, as well as *before* him. Not to add, how low a remark it is, and how unworthy of a place in ſo auguſt a deſcription, that he *could not diſcern the form* of a wind.—It ſeems, therefore, to have been a real ſpirit; either *angelical*, as were thoſe which preſented themſelves to *Abraham* reſting at the door of his tent, and to *Lot* ſitting in the gate of *Sodom*; or elſe the ſpirit of ſome *departed ſaint*, as in the caſe of *Samuel*'s apparition, or the famous appearance of *Moſes* and *Elijah* on the mount of transfiguration.—A ſpirit, aſſuming ſome *vehicle*, in order to become viſible to the human eye: which, accordingly, *Eliphaz* ſaw, exhibiting itſelf as an object of ſight: but ſaw ſo obſcurely and indiſtinctly, that he was not able either to deſcribe its *aſpect*, or to diſcern *whom* it reſembled.

conſequence, but to *convey intelligences* of the utmoſt moment, or to *work impreſſions* of the higheſt advantage.

'Twas in the *dead of night*. All nature lay ſhrouded in darkneſs. Every creature was buried in ſleep. The moſt profound ſilence reigned through the univerſe. In theſe ſolemn moments, *Eliphaz* alone, all wakeful and ſolitary, was muſing upon ſublime and heavenly ſubjects.—When, lo! an awful being, from the inviſible realms, burſt into his apartment*. *A ſpirit paſſed before his face*. Aſtoniſhment ſeized the beholder. His bones ſhivered within him; his fleſh trembled all over him; and the hair of his head ſtood erect with horror.—Sudden and unexpected was the appearance of the phantom; not ſuch its departure. *It ſtood ſtill*, to preſent itſelf more fully to his view. It made a ſolemn pauſe, to prepare his mind for ſome momentous meſſage.—After which, a voice was heard: a voice, for the importance of its meaning, worthy to be had in everlaſting remembrance; for the ſolemnity of its delivery, enough to alarm a heart of ſtone.—It ſpoke; and this was the purport of its words:—"*Shall* man, "*frail man, be juſt before the mighty GOD? Shall* "even *the moſt accompliſhed of mortals be pure in the ſight* "*of his Maker* †! *Behold*, and conſider it attentively. "*He*

* I have given this ſolemn picture a *modern* dreſs, rather for the ſake of variety and illuſtration, than from any apprehenſion of improving the admirable original. Such an attempt, I am ſenſible, would be more abſurdly vain, than to lacquer gold, or, paint the diamond. The deſcription, in *Eliphaz*'s own language, is awful and affecting to the laſt degree, a *night-piece*, dreſſed in all the circumſtances of the deepeſt horror. I queſtion, whether *Shakeſpeare* himſelf, though ſo peculiarly happy for his great command of terrifying images, has any thing ſuperior or comparable to this. The judges of fine compoſition *ſee* the maſterly ſtrokes; and, I believe, the moſt ordinary reader *feels* them, chilling his blood, and awakening emotions of dread in his mind.

† There ſeems to be a ſignificant and beautiful *gradation* in the *Hebrew*

" *He put no* ſuch *truſt in his* moſt exalted *ſervants*, as " ſhould beſpeak them incapable of defect. *And his* " very *angels he charged with folly;* as ſinking, even " in the higheſt perfection of their holineſs, infinitely " beneath his tranſcendent glories; as falling, even in " all the fidelity of their obedience, inexpreſſibly ſhort " of the homage due to his adorable Majeſty. If ange- " lic natures muſt not preſume to juſtify either them- " ſelves or their ſervices, before uncreated purity; " *how much more* abſurd is ſuch a notion, how much " more impious ſuch an attempt, in *them that dwell* " *in houſes of clay;* whoſe original is from the duſt, " and whoſe ſtate is all imperfection!"

I would obſerve from hence, the very ſingular neceſſity of that *poverty* of *ſpirit*, which entirely *renounces* its own attainments; and moſt thankfully *ſubmits* to the righteouſneſs of the incarnate GOD.—To inculcate this leſſon, the Son of the Bleſſed came down from heaven; and preſſed no other principle, with ſo repeated ‡ an importunity, on his hearers. To inſtil the ſame

Hebrew words אנוש and נבר which I have endeavoured to preſerve, by a ſort of *paraphraſtic verſion*.—The reader will obſerve a *new* turn given to the ſentiment; preferable, I think, to that which our *Engliſh* tranſlation exhibits. Not, *Shall man be more juſt than GOD?* but *Shall man be juſt before*, or *in the ſight of GOD?* The paſſage, thus rendered, ſpeaks a truth incomparably more weighty, and needful to be inculcated: a truth exactly parallel to that humbling confeſſion of the prophet, *We are all as an unclean thing;* and to that ſolemn declaration of the pſalmiſt, *In thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified.*

‡ It is well worthy of our obſervation, ſays an excellent commentator, " That no one ſentence uttered by our LORD, " is ſo frequently repeated as this; *Whoſoever ſhall exalt him-* " *ſelf, ſhall be abaſed; and he that ſhall humble himſelf, ſhall* " *be exalted:*" which *often* occurs in the evangeliſts; but is *never* duly accompliſhed in us, till we diſclaim all pretenſion to merit and righteouſneſs of our own, and ſeek them only in the atonement and obedience of JESUS CHRIST.

ſame doctrine, the HOLY GHOST touched the lips of the apoſtles with ſacred eloquence; and made it an eminent part of their commiſſion, "to demoliſh e- "very high imagination." That no expedient might be wanting, to give it a deep and laſting efficacy on the human mind; a phantom ariſes from the valley of the ſhadow of death, or a teacher deſcends from the habitation of ſpirits.—Whatever then we neglect, let us not neglect to cultivate *this grace*, which has been ſo variouſly taught, ſo powerfully enforced.

HARK! a *doleful voice*.—With ſudden ſtarts, and hideous ſcreams, it diſturbs the ſilence of the peaceful night. 'Tis the *ſcreech-owl*, ſometimes in frantic, ſometimes in diſconſolate accents, uttering her woes §. She flies the vocal grove, and ſhuns the ſociety of all the feathered choir. The blooming gardens, and flowery meads, have no charms for her. Obſcene ſhades, ragged ruins, and walls overgrown with ivy, are her favourite haunts. Above, the mouldering precipice nods, and threatens a fall; below, the toad crawls, or the poiſonous adder hiſſes. The ſprightly morning, which awakens other animals into joy, adminiſters no pleaſure to this gloomy recluſe. Even the ſmiling face of day is her averſion; and all its lovely ſcenes create nothing but uneaſineſs.

So, juſt ſo, would it fare with the *ungodly*, were it poſſible to ſuppoſe their admiſſion into the chaſte and bright abodes of endleſs felicity. They would find nothing but diſappointment and ſhame, even at the fountain-head of happineſs and honour.—For how could the tongue, habituated to *profaneneſs*, taſte any delight

§ *Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo*
Sæpe queri, longaſque in fletum ducere voces.
Thus ſung that charming genius, that prince of the ancient poets, that moſt conſummate maſter of elegance and accuracy; all whoſe *ſentiments* are nature, whoſe every *deſcription* is a picture, whoſe whole *language* is muſic—VIRGIL.

delight in the harmonious adorations of heaven? How could the lips, cankered with *ſlander*, reliſh the raptures of everlaſting praiſe? Where would be the ſatisfaction of the *vain* beauty, or the *ſupercilious* grandee? Since, in the temple of the ſkies, no incenſe of flattery would be addreſſed to the former; nor any obſequious homage paid to the latter.—The ſpotleſs and inconceivable purity of the bleſſed GOD, would *flaſh* confuſion on the laſcivious eye. The envious mind muſt be on a *rack* of ſelf-tormenting *paſſions*, to obſerve millions of happy beings, ſhining in all the perfections of glory, and ſolacing themſelves in the fulneſs of joy.—In ſhort, the unſanctified ſoul, amidſt holy and triumphant ſpirits; even in the refined regions of bliſs and immortality; would be like this melancholy bird, *diſlodged* from her darkſome retirement, and *impriſoned* under the beams of day *.

The voice of this creature ſcreaming at our windows, or of the raven croaking over our houſes, is, they ſay, a *token* of approaching *death*. There are perſons who would regard ſuch an incident with no ſmall degree of ſolicitude. Trivial as it is, it would damp their ſpirits, perhaps break their reſt.—One cannot but wonder,

* I would beg of the reader to obſerve, with what *emphaſis* and *propriety* our LORD touches this important point, in his memorable reply to *Nicodemus*. *Verily, verily I ſay unto thee, Except a man be born again, he* CANNOT *enter into the kingdom of heaven*; q. d. "I wave the *authority* of the ſupreme "Judge, and ſpeak with the *condeſcenſion* of a teacher in *Iſrael*. "Tho' I might, without being liable to the laſt control, paſs "it into a ſovereign decree, that unrenewed mortals, who are "ſlaves to corrupt appetite, SHALL NOT enter the habitations "of the juſt; I rather chuſe to repreſent it as a caſe *utterly* "*impoſſible*; and charge the calamity, not upon divine ſeveri-"ty, but upon human folly. Such perſons, from the very na-"ture of things, preclude themſelves; they incapacitate their "own minds; and contrarieties muſt be reconciled, before "*they*, in their unregenerate condition, *can* be partakers of "thoſe ſpiritual and ſublime delights." *John* iii. 3.

wonder, that people ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be affrighted at ſuch *fantaſtical*, and yet be quite unaffected with *real*, preſages of their diſſolution. Real preſages of this awful event addreſs us from every quarter. What are theſe *incumbent glooms*, which overwhelm the world, but a kind of *pall* provided for nature; and an image of that long night, which will quickly cover the inhabitants of the whole earth? What an affinity has the ſleep *, which will very ſoon weigh down my drowſy eye-lids, with that ſtate of entire ceſſation, in which all my ſenſes muſt be laid aſide! The ſilent chamber, and the bed of ſlumber, are a very ſignificant repreſentation of the land, where all things are huſhed, all things are forgotten.—What meant that deep *death-bell note*, which, the other evening, ſaddened the air? Laden with heavieſt accents, it ſtruck our ears, and ſeemed to knock at the door of our hearts. Surely, it brought a meſſage to ſurviving mortals, and thus the tidings ran: "Mortals, the deſtroyer of your race is on his way. The laſt enemy has begun the purſuit; and is gaining ground upon you, every moment. His paths are ſtrewed with heaps of ſlain. Even now his javelin has laid one of your neighbours in the duſt; and will ſoon, very ſoon, aim the *inevitable blow* at each of your lives."

We need not go down to the charnel-houſe, nor carry our ſearch into the repoſitories of the dead, in order to find memorials of our impending doom. A multitude of theſe remembrancers are planted in all our paths, and point the heedleſs paſſengers to their long home. I can hardly enter a conſiderable town, but I meet the funeral proceſſion, or the mourners going about the ſtreets. The *hatchment* ſuſpended on the wall, or the *crape* ſtreaming in the air, are ſilent intimations, that both *rich* and *poor* have been emptying their houſes, and repleniſhing their ſepulchres. I can ſcarce join in any converſation, but mention is made

* *Et conſanguineus lethi ſopor.* VIRG.

made of ſome that are given over by the phyſician, and hovering on the confines of eternity; of others, that have juſt dropt their clay amidſt weeping friends, and are gone to appear before the Judge of all the earth, There's not a *news-paper* comes to my hand, but amidſt all its entertaining narrations, reads ſeveral ſerious *lectures* of *mortality*. What elſe are the repeated accounts—of age worn out by ſlow-conſuming ſickneſſes—of youth daſhed to pieces by ſome ſudden ſtroke of caſualty—of patriots exchanging their ſeats in the ſenate for a lodging in the tomb—of miſers reſigning their breath, and (O relentleſs deſtiny!) leaving their very riches for others? Even the vehicles of our amuſement are regiſters of the deceaſed; and the voice of *fame* ſeldom ſounds, but in concert with a *knell*.

Theſe monitors croud every place; not ſo much as the ſcenes of our diverſion excepted. What are the decorations of our public buildings, and the moſt elegant furniture of our parlours, but the imagery of death, and trophies of the tomb? That marble buſt, and thoſe gilded pictures, how ſolemnly they *recognize* the fate of others, and ſpeakingly *remind* us of our own!—I ſee, I hear, and O! I feel this great truth. It is interwoven with my conſtitution. The frequent decays of the ſtructure foretel its final ruin. What are all the pains, that have been darted through my limbs; what every diſeaſe, that has aſſaulted my health; but the *advanced guards* of the foe? What are the languors and wearineſs that attend the labours of each revolving day, but the more *ſecret practices* of the adverſary, ſlowly undermining the earthly tabernacle?

Amidſt ſo many notices, ſhall we go on thoughtleſs and unconcerned? Can none of theſe progneſtics, which are ſure as oracles, awaken our attention, and engage our circumſpection? *Noah*, 'tis written, *being warned of GOD, prepared an ark*. Imitate, my ſoul, imitate this excellent example. Admoniſhed by ſuch a cloud

a cloud of witneſſes, be continually putting thyſelf in a readineſs for the laſt change. Let not that day, of which thou haſt ſo many infallible ſigns, come upon thee unawares.—Get the *ivy untwined*, and thy affections diſentangled from this inchanting world, that thou mayſt be able to quit it without reluctance. Get the dreadful *hand-writing cancelled*, and all thy ſins blotted out, that thou mayſt depart in peace, and have nothing to fear at the deciſive tribunal. Get, O! get thyſelf intereſted in the Redeemer's *merits*, and tranſformed into his ſacred *image;* then ſhalt thou be meet for the inheritance of ſaints in light, and mayſt even deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with CHRIST.

SOMETIMES in my evening-walk I have heard

——The wakeful bird
Sing darkling, and in ſhadieſt covert hid,
Tune her nocturnal note *.

How different the *airs* of this charming ſongſter, from thoſe harſh and boding *outcries!* The little creature ran through all the variations of muſic; and ſhewed herſelf miſtreſs of every grace, which conſtitutes or embelliſhes harmony.—Sometimes ſhe ſwells a manly throat, and her ſong kindles into ardor. The tone is ſo *bold*, and ſtrikes with ſuch energy, you would imagine the ſprightly ſerenader in the very next thicket. Anon the ſtrain *languiſhes*, and the mournful warbler melts into tenderneſs. The melancholy notes juſt ſteal upon the ſhades, and faintly touch your ear; or, in ſoft and ſadly-pleaſing accents, they ſeem to die along the diſtant vale. Silence is pleaſed, and night liſtens to the trilling tale.

What an invitation is this, to ſlip away from the thronged city! This coy and modeſt minſtrel entertains only the *lovers* of *retirement*. Thoſe who are carouſing over their bowls, or ranting at the riotous club,

* MILT. *Par. Loſt*, b. III. l. 38.

club, lose this feast of harmony.—In like manner, the pleasures of religion, and the joy of reconciliation with GOD; the satisfactions arising from an established interest in CHRIST, and from the prospect of a blissful immortality; these are all lost to the mind, that is ever *in the croud;* and dares not, or delights not, to retire into itself.—Are we charmed with the nightingale's song? Do we wish to have it nearer, and hear it oftener? Let us seek a renewed heart, and a resigned will; a conscience that whispers peace, and passions that are tuned by grace. Then shall we never want a melody in our own breasts, far more *musically pleasing* than sweet *Philomela*'s sweetest strains.

As different as the voices of these birds, are the *circumstances* of those few persons who continue awake.—Some are squandering, pearls shall I say, or kingdoms? No; but what is unspeakably more precious, time; squandering this inestimable talent, with the most senseless and wanton prodigality. Not content with allowing a few *spare minutes* for the purpose of necessary recreation, they lavish many hours, devote *whole nights*, to that idle diversion of shuffling, ranging, and detaching a set of painted pasteboards.—Others, instead of this busy trifling, act the part of their own tormentors. They even piquet themselves *, and call it amusement; they are torn by wild horses, yet term it a sport. What else is the *gamester*'s practice? His mind is stretched on the tenter-hooks of anxious suspense, and agitated by the fiercest extremes of hope and fear. While the dice are rattling, his heart is throbbing; his fortune is tottering: and, possibly, at the very next throw, the one sinks in the gulf of ruin, the other is hurried into the rage of distraction.

Some, snatched from the bloom of health, and the lap of plenty, are confined to the *chamber* of *sickness:* where they are constrained, either to plunge into the everlasting

* Alluding to a very painful punishment inflicted on delinquents among the soldiery.

everlasting world, in an unprepared condition; or else (sad alternative!) to think over all the follies of a heedless life, and all the bitterness of approaching death. The disease rages; it baffles the force of medicine; and urges the reluctant wretch to the brink of the precipice. While furies rouse the conscience, and point at the bottomless pit below.—Perhaps, his *drooping mother*, deprived long ago of the husband of her bosom, and bereft of all her other offspring, is, even now, receiving the blow which consummates her calamities *. In vain she tries to assuage the sorrows of a beloved son; in vain she attempts, with her tender offices, to prolong a life dearer than her own. He faints in her arms; he bows his head; he sinks in death. Fatal, doubly fatal, that last expiring pang! While it dislodges the unwilling soul, it rends an *only child* from the yearning embraces of a parent, and tears away the support of her age from a disconsolate widow.

While *those* long for a reprieve, *others* invite the stroke. Quite weary of the world, with a restless impatience,

* This brings to my mind one of the deepest *mourning-pieces* extant in the productions of the pen. The sacred historian paints it in all the simplicity of style, yet with all the strength of colouring.—When *JESUS came nigh to the gate of the city, behold! there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.*—What a gradation is here! How pathetically beautiful! Every fresh circumstance widens the wound; aggravates the calamity; till the description is worked up into the most finished picture of exquisite and inconsolable distress.—He was a *young man*; cut off in the flower of life, amidst a thousand gay expectations, and smiling hopes. A son; an *only* son; the afflicted mother's all: so that none remained to preserve the name, or perpetuate the family. What rendered the case still more deplorable, *she was a widow*: left entirely desolate: abandoned to her woes; without any to share her sorrows, or to comfort her under the irreparable loss.—Is not this a fine sketch of the *impassioned* and *picturesque*? Who can consider the narrative with any attention, and not feel his heart penetrated with a tender commiseration? *Luke* vii. 12.

patience, they ſigh for diſſolution: ſome pining away under the tedious decays of an incurable *conſumption*; or gaſping for breath, and almoſt ſuffocated by an inundation of *dropſical* waters. On ſome a relentleſs *cancer* has faſtened its envenomed teeth; and is gnawing them, tho' in the midſt of bodily vigour, in the midſt of pitying friends, gradually to death. Others are on a rack of agonies, by convulſive fits of the ſtone. O! how the pain writhes their limbs; how the ſweat bedews their fleſh; and their eye-balls wildly roll! Methinks the night condoles with theſe her diſtreſſed children; and ſheds dewy tears over their ſorrowful abodes.—But of all mortals, *they* are the moſt exquiſitely miſerable, who groan beneath the preſſure of a *melancholy* mind, or ſmart under the laſhes of a *reſentful* conſcience. Tho' robed in ermine, or covered with jewels, the ſtate of a ſlave chained to the galleys, or of an exile condemned to the mines, is a perfect paradiſe compared with theirs.

O! that the *votaries* of *mirth*, whoſe life is a continued round of merriment and whim, would beſtow one ſerious reflection on this *variety* of human *woes!* It might teach them to be leſs enamoured with the few languid ſweets, that are thinly ſcattered through this vale of tears, and environed with ſuch a multitude of ragged thorns. It might teach them no longer to dance away their years, with a giddy *rambling impulſe;* but to aſpire with a determined aim, after thoſe happy regions, where delights, abundant and unembittered, flow.

Can there be circumſtances, which a man of wiſdom, would more earneſtly deprecate, than theſe ſeveral inſtances of grievous tribulation? There are; and, what is very aſtoniſhing, they are frequently the deſire and the choice of thoſe, who fancy themſelves the ſole heirs of happineſs: thoſe I mean, who are launching out into the depths of *extravagance*, and running exceſſive lengths of *riot:* who are proſtitut-

ing their reputation, and sacrificing their peace, to the gratification of their lusts; sapping the foundation of their health, in debaucheries; or shipwrecking the interests of their families, in their bowls; and, what is worse, are forfeiting the joys of an eternal heaven, for the *sordid* satisfactions of the beast; for the *transitory* sensations of an hour.—Ye slaves of appetite, how far am I from envying your gross sensualities, and voluptuous revels! Little, ah! little are you sensible, that, while Indulgence showers her roses, and Luxury diffuses her odours, they scatter *poisons* also, and shed unheeded *bane* *: evils incomparably more malignant, than the wormwood and gall of the sharpest affliction.—Since death is in the drunkard's cup, and worse than poinards in the harlot's embrace, may it ever be the privilege of the man whom I love, to go without his share of these *pestilent sweets* †!

ABUNDANCE of living sparks glitter in the lanes, and twinkle under the hedges. I suppose they are the *glow-worms*; which have lighted their little lamps, and obtained leave, thro' the absence of the sun, to play a feeble beam. A faint glimmer just serves to render them perceivable, without tending at all to dissipate the shades, or making any amends for the departed day.—Should some weather-beaten traveller, dropping with wet, and shivering with cold, hover round this *mimicry* of *fire*, in order to dry his garments, and warm his benumbed limbs; should some bewildered traveller, groping for his way, in a starless night and

* *Yes; in the flow'rs that wreathe the sparkling bowl,*
Fell adders hiss, and pois'nous serpents roll. PRIOR's *Sol.*

† *Quam suave est suavitatibus istis carere!* was St *Augustine*'s pious exclamation. The substance of which Mr *Pope* has expressed, with more simplicity, and with no less dignity.

Count all th' advantage prosp'rous vice attains;
'Tis but what virtue flies from, and disdains.

and trackleſs deſert, take one of theſe *languid tapers*, as a light to his feet, and a lantern to his paths: how certainly would both the one and the other be fruſtrated of their expectation!—And are *they* more likely to ſucceed, who, neglecting that ſovereign balm, which diſtilled from the croſs, apply any *carnal* diverſion, to heal the anxiety of the mind? who, deaf to the infallible deciſions of revelation, reſign themſelves over to the erroneous *conjectures* of *reaſon*, in order to find the way that leadeth unto life? or, laſtly, who have recourſe to the *froth* of this vain world, for a ſatisfactory portion, and a ſubſtantial happineſs? Their conduct is in no degree wiſer; their diſappointment equally ſure; and their miſcarriage infinitely more diſaſtrous. To ſpeak in the delicate language of a ſacred writer, "They ſow the wind, and will reap the whirlwind *."

To ſpeak more plainly; the pleaſures of the world, which we are *all* ſo prone to dote upon; and the powers of fallen reaſon, which *ſome* are ſo apt to idolize†; are

* Hoſ. viii. 7.

† I hope it will be obſerved, that I am far from decrying that noble faculty of reaſon, when exerted in her proper ſphere; when acting in a *deferential ſubordination* to the revealed will of heaven. While ſhe exerciſes her powers within theſe appointed limits, ſhe is unſpeakably ſerviceable, and cannot be too induſtriouſly cultivated.—But, when ſhe ſets up herſelf in *proud contradiſtinction* to the ſacred oracles; when, all-arrogant and ſelf-ſufficient, ſhe ſays to the word of ſcripture, *I have no need of thee*; ſhe is then, I muſt be bold to maintain, not only a glow-worm, but an *ignis fatuus*; not only a bubble, but a ſnare.

May not this remark, with the ſtricteſt propriety, and without the leaſt limitation, be applied to the *generality* of our modern romances, novels, and theatrical entertainments? Theſe are commonly calculated to inflame a wanton fancy; or, if conducted with ſo much modeſty, as not to debauch the affections, they pervert the judgment, and bewilder the taſte. By their incredible adventures; their extravagant parade of gallantry; and their characters, widely different from truth and nature; they inſpire fooliſh conceits; beget idle expectations; intro-

are not only vain, but treacherous: not only a *painted flame*, like these sparkling animals; but much like those unctuous exhalations, which arise from the marshy ground, and often dance before the eyes of the benighted wayfaring man. Kindled into a sort of fire, they personate a guide, and seem to offer their service; but, blazing with *delusive light*, mislead their follower into hidden pits, headlong precipices, and unfathomable gulfs; where, far from his beloved friends, far from all hopes of succour, the unhappy wanderer is swallowed up and lost.

NOT long ago, we observed a very surprising appearance in the western sky. A *prodigious star* took its flaming rout through those coasts; and trailed, as it passed, a tremendous length of fire, almost over half the heavens. Some, I imagine, viewed the portentous stranger, with much the same anxious amazement, as *Belshazzar* beheld the hand-writing upon the wall. Some looked upon it as a *bloody* * *flag*, hung out by divine resentment, over a guilty world. Some read, in its glaring visage, the fate of nations, and the fall of kingdoms †. To others, it shook, or seemed to shake, *pestilence* and *war* from its horrid hair.—For my part, I am not so superstitious as to regard what every astrologer has to prognosticate, upon the accession of a *comet*, or the projection of its huge *vapoury train*. Nothing can be more precarious and unjustifiable, than to draw such conclusions from such events: since they neither are preternatural effects, nor

duce a disgust of genuine history; and indispose their admirers, to acquiesce in the *decent* civilities, or to relish the *sober* satisfactions, of common life.

* —*Liquidæ si quando nocte cometæ*
Sanguinei lugubre *rubent*.— VIRG.

† — — *Crinemque timendi*
Sideris, et terris mutantem regna *cometem*. LUCAN.

nor do they throw the frame of things into any disorder. I would rather adore that omnipotent Being, who rolled those stupendous orbs from his creating hand; and leads them, by his providential eye, thro' unmeasurable tracts of æther: who bids them, now approach the sun, and glow with unsufferable ardors *; now retreat to the utmost bounds of our planetary system, and make their entry among other worlds.

They are harmless visitants. I acquit them from the charge of causing, or being accessary to, desolating plagues. Would to GOD, there were no other more formidable indications of *approaching judgments*, or *impending ruin!* But, alas! when vice becomes predominant, and irreligion almost epidemical: when the sabbaths of a jealous GOD are notoriously profaned; and that "name, which is great, wonderful, and holy," is prostituted to the meanest, or abused to the most execrable purposes: when the worship of our great Creator and Preserver is banished from many of the most *conspicuous families;* and it is deemed a piece of rude impertinence, so much as to mention the gracious Redeemer, in our *genteel interviews:* when it passes for an elegant freedom of behaviour, to ridicule the mysteries of Christianity; and a species of refined conversation, to taint the air with lascivious hints: when those who sit in the *scorner's chair*, sin with a high hand: and many of those who wear the *professor's garb*, are destitute of the power, and content themselves with the mere form of godliness: when such is the state of a community, there is reason, too apparent reason, to be horribly afraid. Such *phænomena*, abounding

* "The comet in the year 1680, according to Sir *Isaac* "*Newton*'s computation, was, in its nearest approach, above "166 times nearer the sun than the earth is. Consequently, "its heat was then 28000 times greater than that of summer. "So that a ball of iron as big as the earth, heated by it, would "hardly become cool in 50,000 years. DERH. *Astr. Theol.* "p. 237.

abounding in the moral world, are not fanciful, but real omens. Will not an injured GOD "be avenged "on such a nation as this?" Will he not be provoked to "sweep it with the besom of destruction *?"

O! that the inhabitants of *Great Britain* would lay these alarming considerations to heart! The LORD of hosts has commanded the sword of *civil discord* to return into its sheath. But have we returned every one from his *evil ways?* Are we become a renewed people; devoted to a dying Saviour; and zealous of good works?—What mean those peals of sobs, which burst from the *expiring cattle?* What mean those melancholy moans, where the lusty droves were wont to low†? What mean those arrows of untimely death, discharged on our innocent and useful animals?

No wantonness or sloth has vitiated the blood of these laborious, temperate creatures. They have contracted no disease from unseasonable indulgencies, and inordinate revellings. The pure stream is their drink; the simple herb their repast. Neither care disturbs their sleep, nor passion inflames their breast. Whence then are they visited with such terrible disorders, as no prudence can prevent, nor any medicines heal?—Surely, these calamities are the weapons of divine displeasure, and manifest

* *Is.* xiv. 23. The eternal Sovereign, speaking of *Babylon*, denounces this threatening, *I will sweep it with the besom of destruction.*—What a noble, but dreadful image, is here! How strongly and awfully pourtrayed! How pregnant also in its signification! intimating the *vile nature*, and expressing the *total extirpation*, of this wicked people; at the same time, suggesting the *perfect ease*, with which the righteous GOD would execute his intended vengeance.

† If these papers should be so happy as to outlive their author, perhaps, it may be needful to inform posterity, that the above-mentioned hints allude to a most terrible, contagious, and mortal *distemper*, raging among the *horned cattle*, in various parts of the kingdom.

manifeſt chaſtiſements of an evil generation *. Surely GOD, the "GOD to whom vengeance belongeth," has ſtill a controverſy with our ſinful land. And who can tell, where the viſitation will end? what a ſtorm may follow theſe preluſive drops?—O! that we may "hear the rod, and who hath appointed it!" Taught by theſe *penal effects* of our diſobedience, may we remove the *accurſed thing* † from our tents; our practices; our hearts! May we turn from all ungodlineſs, before wrath come upon us to the uttermoſt; before iniquity prove our ruin!

SOMETIMES, at this hour, another moſt remarkable ſight amuſes the curious, and alarms the vulgar. A blaze of lambent meteors is kindled, or ſome very extraordinary *lights* are refracted, *in the* quarters of the *north*.—The ſtreams of radiance, like legions ruſhing to the engagement, meet and mingle, inſomuch that the air ſeems to be all conflicting fire. Within a while they ſtart from one another; and, like regions in precipitate flight, ſweep, each a ſeparate way, through the firmament. Now they are quieſcent; anon they are thrown into a quivering motion; preſently the whole horizon is illuminated with the glancing flames. Sometimes, with an aſpect *awfully ludicrous*, they repreſent extravagant and antic vagaries: at other times, you would ſuſpect, that ſome inviſible hand was playing off the dumb *artillery* of the *ſkies*; and, by a ſtrange expedient, giving us the flaſh, without the roar.

The villagers gaze at the ſpectacle, firſt with wonder, then with horror. A general *panic* ſeizes the country. Every heart throbs, and every face is pale. The crouds that flock together, inſtead of diminiſhing, increaſe the

* Hinc *lætis vituli vulgo moriuntur in herbis,*
Et dulces animas plena ad præſepio reddunt.
Balatu hinc *pecorum, et crebris mugitibus amnes,*
Arenteſque ſonant ripæ, colleſque ſupini. VIRG.

† Joſh. vi. 18.

the dread. They catch contagion from each other's looks and words; while fear is in every eye, and every tongue speaks the language of terror. Some see *hideous shapes*, armies mixing in fierce encounter, or fields swimming with blood. Some foresee *direful events*, states overthrown, or mighty monarchs tottering on their thrones. Others, sacred with still more frightful apprehensions, think of nothing but the *day* of *doom*. "Sure," says one, "the unalterable hour "is struck, and the end of all things come."—"See," replies another, "how the blasted stars look wan! "Are not these the signs of the Son of man, coming "in the clouds of heaven?"—"JESUS prepare us" (cries a third, and lifts his eyes in devotion) "for the "Archangel's trump, and the great tribunal!"

If this *waving brightness*, which plays innocently over our heads, be so amazing to multitudes; what inexpressible consternation must overwhelm unthinking mortals, when the *general conflagration* commences! The day, the dreadful day, is approaching, "*in the* "*which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise**, *and*

* 2 *Pet.* iii. 10. I have often thought this verse an eminent instance of that kind of beautiful writing, in which the very *sound* bears a sort of *significancy*; at least, carries an exact correspondence with the sense. The original expression—ροιζηδον—is one of the hoarsest and deepest words in language. Nothing could be more exquisitely adapted to affect the *ear*, as well as impress the *imagination*, with the wreck of nature, and the crash of a falling world.—I scarce ever read this clause, but it brings to my mind that admired description in MILTON:

——On a sudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil, and *jarring sound*,
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges *grate*
Harsh thunder.—— Book II. l. 879.

It is a pleasing employ, and a very laudible office of true criticism, to point out these inferior recommendations of the *sacred*

" *and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; the* " *earth alſo, and all the works that are therein, ſhall* " *be burnt up.*" That mighty hand, which once opened the windows from on high, and broke up the fountains of the great deep, will then unlock all the *magazines* of *fire*, and pour a *ſecond deluge* upon the earth. The vengeful flames, kindled by the breath of the Almighty, ſpread themſelves from the centre to the circumference. Nothing can withſtand their impetuoſity; nothing can eſcape their rage. Univerſal deſolation attends their progreſs. Magnificent palaces, and ſolemn temples, are laid in aſhes. Spacious cities, and impregnable towers, are mingled in one ſmoking maſs. Not only the productions of *human art*, but the works of *almighty power*, are fuel for the devouring element. The everlaſting mountains melt, like the ſnows which cover their ſummit. Even vaſt oceans ſerve only to augment the inconceivable rapidity and fury of the blaze.—O! how ſhall I, or others, ſtand undiſmayed amidſt the glare of a *burning world*, unleſs the LORD JEHOVAH be our defence? How ſhall we be upheld in ſecurity, when the globe itſelf is ſinking in a *fiery ruin*, unleſs the Rock of Ages be our ſupport?

BEHOLD! a new ſpectacle of wonder! The *moon* is making her entry on the eaſtern ſky. See her riſing in clouded majeſty! opening, as it were, and aſſerting her original commiſſion to *rule over the night*. All grand and ſtately, but ſomewhat ſullied is her aſpect. However, ſhe *brightens* as ſhe *advances;* and grows clearer, as ſhe climbs higher: till, at length, her ſilver loſes all its droſs; ſhe unveils her peerleſs light; and becomes " the beauty of heaven, the glory of the ſtars § ;" delighting

ſacred claſſics. Tho' I believe, the inſpired writers themſelves, amidſt all the elevation and magnificence of their divine ideas, diſdained a ſcrupulous attention to ſuch *little niceties* of ſtyle.

§ Eccluſ xliii. 9.

——— *Lucidum cœli decus.* HOR.

delighting every eye, and chearing the whole world with the brightneſs of her appearance, and the ſoftneſs of her ſplendors.—O! thou queen of the ſhades! may it be my ambition to follow this thy inſtructive example! While others are fond to tranſcribe the faſhions of little courts, and to mimic perſonages of inferior ſtate; be it mine to imitate thy *improving purity!* May my conduct become more unblemiſhed, and my temper more refined, as I proceed farther and farther in my probationary courſe! May every ſordid deſire wear away, and every irregular appetite be gradually loſt, as I make nearer approaches to the celeſtial manſions!—Will not this be a comfortable evidence, that I too ſhall ſhine in my adored Redeemer's kingdom? ſhine with a *richer* luſtre, than that which radiates from thy reſplendent orb; ſhine with an *unfading* luſtre, when every ray that beams from thy beauteous ſphere, is totally extinguiſhed?

THE day afforded us a variety of entertaining ſights. Theſe were all withdrawn, at the acceſſion of darkneſs. The ſtars, kindly officious, immediately lent us their aid. This ſerved to *alleviate* the frown of night, rather than to *recover* the objects from their obſcurity. A faint ray, ſcarcely reflected, and not from the entire ſurface of things, gave the ſtraining eye a very imperfect glimpſe; ſuch as rather mocked, than ſatisfied viſion.—Now the moon is riſen, and has collected all her beams, the veil is taken off from the countenance of nature. I ſee the recumbent flocks; I ſee the green hedge-rows, though without the feathered choriſters hopping from ſpray to ſpray. In ſhort, I ſee once again the world's great picture; not indeed in its late lively colours, but more *delicately ſhaded*, and arrayed in *ſofter charms* *.

What

* — — Now reigns
Full orb'd the moon, and with more pleaſing light
Shadowy ſets off the face of things.— MILT.

What a *majeſtic ſcene* is here! incomparably grand, and exquiſitely fine!—The moon, like an immenſe cryſtal lamp, pendent in the magnificent ceiling of the heavens. The ſtars, like ſo many thouſands of golden tapers, fixed in their azure ſockets. All pouring their luſtre on ſpacious cities, and lofty mountains; glittering on the ocean; gleaming on the foreſt; and opening a proſpect, wide as the eye can glance, more various than fancy can paint *.—We are forward to admire the performances of human art. A landſcape, elegantly deſigned, and executed with a maſterly hand; a piece of ſtatuary, which ſeems, amidſt all the recommendations of exact proportion, and graceful attitude, to ſoften into fleſh, and almoſt breathe with life; theſe little *imitations* of nature, we behold with a pleaſing ſurpriſe. And ſhall we be leſs affected, leſs delighted, with the inexpreſſibly-noble, and completely-finiſhed *original!*—The ample dimenſions of *Ranelagh*'s dome; the gay illuminations of *Vaux-hall* grove; I ſhould ſcorn to mention on ſuch an occaſion, were they not the objects of general admiration.

* *As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,*
O'er heav'n's clear azure ſpreads her ſacred light;
When not a breath diſturbs the deep ſerene,
And not a cloud o'ercaſts the ſolemn ſcene:
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And ſtars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole:
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure ſhed,
And tip with ſilver ev'ry mountain's head;
Then ſhine the vales; the rocks in proſpect riſe;
A flood of glory burſts from all the ſkies;
The conſcious ſwains, rejoicing in the ſight,
Eye the blue vault, and bleſs the uſeful light. Iliad VIII.

I tranſcribe theſe lines, becauſe Mr *Pope* ſays, they exhibit, in the original, the fineſt *night-piece* in poetry. And, if they are ſo beautiful in *Homer*'s language, who can ſuſpect their ſuffering any diſadvantage from the pen of his admirable *tranſlator?*

miration. Shall we be charmed with thoſe puny eſſays of finite ingenuity; and touched with no tranſport, at this ſtupendous diſplay of omnipotent ſkill? at the auguſt grandeur, and ſhining ſtatelineſs, of the firmament? which forms an alcove for ten thouſand worlds, and is ornamented with myriads of everlaſting luminaries.—Surely, this muſt betray, not only a total *want* of *religion*, but the moſt abject littleneſs of mind, and the utmoſt *poverty* of *genius*.

The moon is not barely "an *ornament* in the high "places of the LORD *," but of ſignal *ſervice* to the inhabitants of the earth.—How uncomfortable is deep, pitchy, total darkneſs! eſpecially in the long abſence of the winter's ſun. Welcome therefore, thrice welcome, this auſpicious gift of Providence, to enliven the nocturnal gloom, and line with ſilver the raven-coloured mantle of night.—How deſireable to have our ſummer-evenings illuminated! that we may be able to tread the dewy meads, and breathe the delicious fragrance of our gardens; eſpecially, when the ſultry heats render it irkſome and fatiguing, to walk abroad by day.—How chearing to the *ſhepherd*, the uſe of this univerſal lantern; as he tends his fleecy charge, or late conſigns them to their hurdled cots! How comfortable and how advantageous to the *mariner*, as he ploughs the midnight-main, to adjuſt the tackling, to explore his way, and, under the influence of this beaming ſconce, to avoid the fatal rock!—For theſe, and other beneficial purpoſes, the hand of the ALMIGHTY has hung the *ſtately branch* on high; and filled it with a ſplendor, not confined to a ſingle edifice, or commenſurate to a particular ſquare, but diffuſive as the whole extent of the hemiſphere.

The moſt faithful of our inferior ſervants are ſometimes tardy in their office, ſometimes negligent of their duty. But this celeſtial attendant is moſt *exactly punctual*, at all the ſtated periods of her miniſtration.

* Eccluſ. xliii. 9.

tion. If we chuſe to prolong our journey, after the ſun is gone down; the moon, during her whole *increaſe*, is always ready to act in the capacity of a guide. If we are inclined to ſet out very early in the morning; the moon in her *decreaſe* prevents the dawn, on purpoſe to offer her aſſiſtance. And, becauſe it is ſo pleaſant a thing for the eyes to behold the light, the moon at her *full*, by a courſe of unintermitted waiting, gives us, as it were, a double day. —How apparently has the divine wiſdom intereſted itſelf, in providing even for the *pleaſurable accommodation* of man! How deſirous, that he ſhould want no piece of commodious furniture, no kind of delightful convenience! and, in proſecution of theſe benevolent intentions, has annexed ſo valuable an appendage to the terreſtrial globe.—Juſtly, therefore, does the pſalmiſt celebrate that admirable conſtitution, which ordained *the moon and the ſtars to govern the night*, as an inſtance of rich goodneſs, *and of mercy which endureth for ever* *.

THE moon, it is confeſſed, is *no luminous* body. All the brightneſs, which beautifies her countenance, is originally in the ſun, and no more than tranſmiſſively in her. That glorious orb is the parent of day, and the palace of light. From thence the morning-ſtar gilds her horn †; from thence the planetary circles are crowned with luſtre; and from thence the moon derives all her ſilver radiance.—It is pleaſing to reflect, that ſuch is the caſe with the *all-ſufficient Redemer*, and

* Pſal. cxxxvi. 9.

† I might, to juſtify this expreſſion, obſerve, that the planet *Venus*, commonly called the morning-ſtar, is found, by our teleſcopes, frequently to appear *horned*; or to have a *creſcent* of light, ſomewhat like the moon, a little before or after her conjunction. But this would be a remark too deep and refined for my ſcheme; which proceeds only upon a *ſuperficial* knowledge, and the moſt *obvious* appearances, of nature.

and his *dependent people*. We are repleniſhed from his fulneſs. What do we poſſeſs, which we have not received; and what can we deſire, which we may not expect; from that never-failing Source of all good? He is the author of our faith, and the former of our graces. In his unſpotted life, we ſee the path; in his meritorious death, the price; and in his triumphant reſurrection, the proof, of bliſs and immortality. If we offend, and fall ſeven times a-day; he is the LORD our *peace* *. If we are depraved, and our beſt deeds very unworthy; he is the LORD our *righteouſneſs* †. If we are blind, and even brutiſh, in heavenly knowledge; he is the LORD our *wiſdom* ‡: his word diſpels the ſhades; his Spirit ſcatters the intellectual gloom; his eye looks our darkneſs into day. In ſhort, we are nothing, and "CHRIST is all." Worſe than defective in ourſelves, "we are *complete* "in him." So that if we ſhine, it is with delegated rays, and with borrowed light. We act by a ſtrength, and glory in merits, not our own!—O! may we be thoroughly ſenſible of our dependence on the Saviour! May we conſtantly imbibe his propitious beams; and never, by indulging *unbelief*, or backſliding into *folly*, withdraw our ſouls from his benign influences! leſt we loſe our comfort, and our holineſs; as the fair ruler of the night loſes her ſplendor, when her urn is turned from its fountain ‖, and receives no more communications of ſolar effulgence.

THE moon is inceſſantly *varying*, either in her aſpect, or her ſtages.—Sometimes ſhe looks full upon us, and her viſage is all luſtre. Sometimes ſhe appears in profile, and ſhews us only half her enlightened face. Anon a radiant creſcent but juſt adorns her brow. Soon it

* Judges vi. 24. † Jer. xxiii. 6. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 30.
‖ Alluding to thoſe truly poetical lines in *Milton*,
Hither, as to their fountain, other ſtars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light.
Par. Loſt, b. VII. l. 364.

it dwindles into a slender streak: till, at length, all her beauty vanishes, and she becomes a beamless orb. —Sometimes she rises with the *descending day*, and begins her procession amidst admiring multitudes. Ere long she defers her progress till the *midnight-watches*, and steals unobserved upon the sleeping world.—Sometimes she just enters the edges of the western *horizon*, and drops us a ceremonious visit. Within a while, she sets out on her nightly tour, from the opposite regions of the east; traverses the whole *hemisphere;* and never offers to withdraw, till the more refulgent partner of her sway renders her presence unnecessary.—In a word, she is, while conversant among us, still waxing or waning, and "never continueth in one stay."

Such is the moon; and such are all *sublunary things;* exposed to perpetual vicissitudes. How often, and how soon, have the faint echoes of *renown* slept in silence, or been converted into the clamours of obloquy! The same lips, almost with the same breath, cry Hosanna, and Crucify.—Have not *riches* confessed their notorious treachery, a thousand and a thousand times? either melting away, like snow in our hands, by insensible degrees; or escaping, like a winged prisoner from its cage, with a precipitate flight.—Have we not known the bridegroom's *closet*, an antechamber to the *tomb;* and heard the voice, which so lately pronounced the sparkling pair husband and wife, proclaim an everlasting divorce; and seal the decree with that solemn asseveration, "Ashes to ashes, dust to dust?" —Our *friends*, though the medicine of life; our *health*, though the balm of nature; are a most precarious possession. How soon may the first become a corpse in our arms; and how easily is the last destroyed in its vigour!—You have seen, no doubt, a set of pretty *painted birds*, perching on your trees, or sporting in your meadows. You was pleased with the lovely visitants, that brought beauty on their wings, and melody in their throats. But could you insure the *continuance*

of

of this agreeable entertainment? No, truly. At the leaſt diſturbing noiſe, at the leaſt terrifying appearance, they ſtart from their ſeats; they mount the ſkies; and are gone in an inſtant, are gone for ever. Would you chuſe to have a happineſs, which bears date with their arrival, and expires at their departure? If you could not be content with a portion, enjoyable only through ſuch a *fortuitous term*, not of years, but of moments, O! take up with nothing earthly; ſet your affections on things above; there alone is "no "variableneſs or ſhadow of turning."

Job is not a more illuſtrious pattern of patience, than an eminent exemplification of this remark.—View him in his *private eſtate*. He heaps up ſilver as the duſt; he waſhes his ſteps in butter, and the rock pours him out rivers of oil.—View him in his *public character*. Princes revere his dignity; the aged liſten to his wiſdom; every eye beholds him with delight; every tongue loads him with bleſſings.—View him in his *domeſtic circumſtances*. On one hand, he is defended by a troop of ſons; on the other, adorned with a train of daughters; and on all ſides ſurrounded by "a ve-"ry great houſehold."—Never was human felicity ſo conſummate; never was *diſaſtrous revolution* ſo ſudden. The lightning, which conſumed his cattle, was not more terrible, and ſcarce more inſtantaneous. The joyful parent is bereft of his offspring, and his "chil-"dren are buried in death." The man of affluence is ſtript of his abundance; and he who was clothed in ſcarlet, embraces the dunghill. The venerable patriarch is the deriſion of ſcoundrels; and the late darling of an indulgent providence, is become "a brother to dra-"gons, a companion of owls."—Nor need we go back to former ages, for proofs of this afflicting truth. In our times, in all times, the wheel continues the ſame inceſſant whirl. And frequently thoſe who are triumphing to-day in the higheſt *elevations* of joy, to-morrow are bemoaning the inſtability of mortal affairs,

in

in the very *depths* of misery *.—Amidst so much fluctuation and uncertainty, how wretched is the condition, which has no anchor of the soul, sure and stedfast! May thy loving-kindness, O GOD, be our present treasure; and thy future glory, our reversionary inheritance! Then shall our happiness, not be like the full-orbed moon, which is "light that *decreaseth* in "its perfection;" but like the sun, when he goeth forth in his strength, and knoweth no other change, but that of *shining more* and more unto the perfect day.

METHINKS, in this ever-varying sphere, I see a representation, not only of our temporal advantages, but also of our *spiritual accomplishments*. Such, I am sure, is what the kind partiality of a friend would call *my righteousness:* and such, I am apt to suspect ‡, is the righteousness

* I believe, I may venture to apply, what the *Temanite* says of the affairs of the wicked, to all sublunary things, as a true description of their very *great instability*. *Job* xxii. 16. יסודם נהר יצק rendered by *Schultens*, *Flumen fusum fundamentum eorum*. *Their foundation* (or what they reckon their most solid and stable possession) *is a flood poured out*.—Which is one of the boldest images, and most poetical beauties, I ever met with in any language, sacred or profane. In order to have a tolerable conception of the image, and a taste of its beauty, you must suppose a *torrent* of waters, rushing in broken cataracts, and with impetuous rapidity, from a steep and craggy mountain. Then imagine to yourself an *edifice*, built upon the surge of this rolling precipice; which has no other basis than one of those headlong *whirling waves*. Was there ever such a representation of transitory prosperity, tending, with inconceivable swiftness, unto ruin? Yet such is every form of human felicity, that is not grounded on JESUS, and a participation of his merits, who is the *Rock of Ages;* on JESUS, and his image formed in our hearts, which is the *hope of glory*.

‡ I would not be understood, as measuring, in this respect, *others* by *myself;* but as taking my estimate from the unerring standard of scripture. And indeed, proceeding on this evidence, supported by this authority, I might have ventured

righteousness of every man living. Now we exercise it, in some few instances, in some little degrees. Anon sin revives, and leads our souls into a transient, though unwilling captivity. Now we are *meek;* but soon a ruffling accident intervenes, and turns our composure into a fretful disquietude. Now we are *humble;* soon we reflect upon some inconsiderable or imaginary superiority over others, and a sudden elatement swells our minds. Now, perhaps, we possess a clean heart, and are warm with holy love. But O! how easily is the purity of our affections sullied! how soon the fervour of our gratitude cooled! And is there not something amiss even in our best moments? something to be *ashamed* of, in all we *are;* something to be *repented* of, in all we *do?*

With what gladness, therefore, and adoring thankfulness, should we "submit to the righteousness of "our incarnate GOD;" and *receive*, as a divine gift, what cannot be *acquired* by human works ‡!—A writer of the first distinction, and nicest discernment, styles the obedience of our glorious Surety, an *everlasting righteousness;*

farther than a bare *suspicion.* For "there is not a *just* man "upon earth that doth good, and *sinneth not*," says the Spirit of inspiration by *Solomon (Eccles.* vii. 20.)—Nay, such is the purity, and so extensive are the demands of the divine law, that an apostle makes a still more humbling acknowledgment; "In *many* things we offend *all.*" (*Jam.* iii. 2.)—And the unerring Teacher, who most thoroughly knew our frame, directs the most advanced, most established, and most watchful Christians, to pray daily for the forgiveness of their *daily trespasses.*—To which testimonies, I beg leave to add an elegant passage from the *Canticles;* because it not only expresses the sentiment of this paragraph, but illustrates it by the very same similitude. *She* (the church) *is fair as the moon; clear as the sun.* Fair as the moon, the lesser and changeable light, in her *sanctification;* clear as the sun, the greater and invariable luminary, in her *justification:* the inherent holiness of believers being imperfect, and subject to many inequalities; while their imputed righteousness is every way complete, and constantly like itself. *Cant.* vi. 10. ‡ Rom. vi. 17.—x. 3.

righteouſneſs *; ſuch as was ſubject to no interruption, nor obſcured by the leaſt blemiſh; but proceeded always in the ſame uniform tenor, of the moſt ſpotleſs perfection.—This righteouſneſs, in another ſenſe, anſwers the prophet's exalted deſcription; as its beneficial and ſovereign efficacy knows no end; but laſts thro' all our life; laſts in the trying hour of death; laſts at the deciſive day of judgment; laſts through every generation; and will laſt to all eternity.

SOMETIMES I have ſeen that reſplendent globe *ſtript* of her *radiance;* or, according to the emphatical language of ſcripture, "turned into blood." The earth, interpoſing with its opake body, intercepted the ſolar rays, and caſt its own gloomy ſhadow on the moon. The malignant influence gained upon her ſickening orb; extinguiſhed, more and more, the feeble remainders of light; till at length, like one in a *deep ſwoon*, no comelineſs was left in her countenance; ſhe was totally overſpread with darkneſs.—At this juncture, what a multitude of eyes were gazing upon the rueful ſpectacle! even of thoſe eyes, which diſregarded the empreſs of the night, or beheld her with indifference, when, robed in glory, and riding in her triumphal chariot, ſhe ſhed a ſofter day through the nations. But now, under theſe circumſtances of diſgrace, they watch her motions with the moſt *prying attention*. In every place, her misfortune is the object of general obſervation; and the prevailing topic of diſcourſe, in every company.

Is it not thus with regard to *perſons* of *eminence*, in their reſpective ſpheres! Kings, at the head of their ſubjects; nobles, ſurrounded with their dependents; and (after names of ſo much grandeur, may I be allowed to add?) miniſters labouring among their people†; are

* Dan. ix. 24.

† *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is ſet on an hill, cannot be hid.* Matth. v. 14.

are each in a conſpicuous ſtation. Their conduct in its *minuteſt* ſtep, eſpecially in any *miſcarriage*, will be narrowly ſurveyed, and critically ſcanned. Can there be a louder call, to ponder the paths of their feet, and to be particularly jealous over all their ways?—Thoſe who move in inferior life, may groſsly offend; and little alarm be given, perhaps no notice taken. But it is not to be expected, that the leaſt ſlip in their carriage, the leaſt flaw in their character, will paſs undiſcovered. *Malice*, with her eagle-eyes, will be ſure to diſcern them; while *Cenſure*, with her ſhrill trumpet, will be as far from concealing them; as *Calumny*, with her treacherous whiſpers, from extenuating them. A planet may ſink below the horizon; or a ſtar, for ſeveral months, withdraw its ſhining; and ſcarce one in ten thouſand perceive the loſs. But, if the moon ſuffers a tranſient eclipſe, almoſt half the world are ſpectators of her diſhonour.

Very different was the caſe, when, at this late hour, I have taken a ſolitary walk on the *weſtern cliffs*. At the foot of the ſteep mountain, the ſea, all clear and ſmooth, ſpread itſelf into an immenſe plain, and held a watery mirror to the ſkies. Infinite heights above, the firmament ſtretched its azure expanſe, beſpangled with unnumbered ſtars, and adorned with the moon, "walking in brightneſs *." She ſeemed to contemplate herſelf, with a peculiar pleaſure; while the *tranſparent ſurface* both received, and returned her *ſilver-image*. Here, inſtead of being covered with ſackcloth, ſhe ſhone with double luſtre; or rather, with a luſtre multiplied, in proportion to the number of beholders, and their various ſituations.

Such, methinks, is the effect of an exemplary behaviour, in perſons of exalted rank. Their courſe, as it is nobly diſtinguiſhed, ſo it will be happily *influential*. Others will catch the diffuſive ray; and be ambitious to reſemble a pattern ſo attracting, ſo commanding.

* Job xxxi. 26.

manding. Their amiable qualities will not terminate in themſelves; but we ſhall ſee them *reflected* from their families, their acquaintance, their retainers. Juſt as we may now behold another moon, trembling * in the ſtream, glittering in the carnal, and diſplaying its lovely impreſs on every collection of waters.

THE moon, philoſophy ſays, is a ſort of *ſovereign* over the *great deep*. Her orb, like a royal ſceptre, ſways the ocean, and actuates the fluid realms. It ſwells the tides, and perpetuates the reciprocal returns of ebb and flow. By which means the liquid element purges off its filth; and is preſerved from being putrefied itſelf, and from poiſoning the world.—Is the moon thus *operative* on the vaſt abyſs? And ſhall not the faith of eternal and infinite delights to come, be equally efficacious on this ſoul of mine?—Far above her argent fields, are treaſures of *happineſs*, unſeen by mortal eye, by mortal ear unheard, and unconceived by any human imagination. In that deſirable world, the moſt diſtinguiſhed and exalted *honours* alſo are conferred; in compariſon with which, the thrones and diadems of earthly monarchs are empty pageants, and childiſh toys.—Yonder arch of ſapphire, with all its ſpangles of gold, is but the floor of thoſe divine abodes. What then are the apartments; what is the palace? how bright with glories; how rich with bliſs?

O ye manſions of bleſſedneſs; ye beauties of my Father's kingdom; which far outſhine theſe lamps of the viſible heaven; tranſmit your ſweet and winning invitations to my heart. *Attract* and *refine* all my affections. Withdraw them from *ſtagnating* on the ſordid ſhores of fleſh; never ſuffer them to ſettle upon the impure lees of ſenſe; but impreſs them with *emotions* of reſtleſs deſire after ſublime and celeſtial joys: —Joys, that will proceed, ſtill proceed in a copious and everlaſting flow, when ſeas ſhall ceaſe to roll:—Joys, that will charm every faculty with unimaginable pleaſure;

* *Splendet tremulo ſub lumine pontus.* VIRG.

pleaſure ; when the moon, with her waxing ſplendors, ſhall chear our ſight no more.

ENOUGH for the preſent evening. My thoughts have been ſufficiently exerciſed, and my ſteps begin to be attended with wearineſs. Let me obey the admonition of nature ; and give reſpite to my meditations, ſlumber to my eyes.—But ſtay.—Shall I retire to the bed of ſleep, with as little ceremony, and with as much inattention, as the brutes to their ſordid lair ? Are no *acknowledgments* due to that divine Being, who is the ſupport of my life, and the length of my days ? Have I no farther need of his *protecting* care ; no more occaſion for the bleſſings of his goodneſs ?—*Lepidus*, perhaps, may laugh at the bended knee ; and have a thouſand darts of raillery ready to diſcharge on the practice of devotion. The wits, I know, are unmercifully ſevere on what *they* call the drudgery of prayer, and the fantaſtical rant of praiſe. Theſe they leave to the illiterate labourer, and the mean mechanic ; or treat them, with a contemptuous ſneer, as the parſon's ignoble trade.

Is it then an inſtance of *ſuperſtitious* blindneſs, to diſtinguiſh ; or of *whimſical* zeal, to celebrate, the moſt ſupereminent excellency and merit ? Is it an *ungraceful* buſineſs, or does it argue a *grovelling* diſpoſition, to magnify goodneſs tranſcendently rich and diffuſive ?—What can be ſo truly becoming a *dependent ſtate*, as to pay our adoring homage to the Author of all perfection, and profeſs our devoted allegiance to the ſupreme almighty Governor of the univerſe ?—Can any thing more ſignificantly beſpeak an *ingenuous temper*, or adminiſter a more real ſatisfaction to its fineſt feelings, than the exerciſes of penitential devotion ; by which we give vent to an honeſt anguiſh, or melt into filial ſorrow, for our inſenſibility to the beſt of friends, for our diſobedience to the beſt of parents ?—In a word, can there be a more *ſublime pleaſure*, than to dwell, in fixed contemplation, on the beauties of the

the eternal Mind; the amiable original of all that is fair, grand, and harmonious; the beneficent giver of all that is convenient, comfortable, and useful?—Can there be a more *advantageous employ*, than to present our requests to the Father of mercies; opening our minds to the irradiations of his wisdom, and all the faculties of our souls to the communications of his grace?—It is strange, unaccountably strange, that the notion of *dignity* in sentiment, and the pursuit of *refined* enjoyment, should ever be disunited from devotion: that persons, who make pretentions to an improved taste, and exalted genius, should neglect this most ennobled intercourse with the wisest and best of beings, the inexhaustible source of honour and joy.

Shall I be deterred from approaching this source of the purest delight? deterred from pursuing this highest improvement of my nature? deterred from all by a *formidable* banter, or confuted by one *irrefragable* smile?—No: let the moon, in her resplendent sphere; and yonder pole, with all its starry train: witness, if I be silent even or morn; if I refrain to kindle in my heart, and breathe from my lips, the reasonable incense of praise; praise to that great and glorious GOD, who formed the earth, and built the skies; who poured from his hand the watery world, and shed the all-surrounding air abroad.—"Thou also madest the "night, Maker omnipotent! and thou, the day! "which I, tho' less than the least of all thy mercies, "have passed in safety, tranquillity, and comfort.— "When I was lost in the extravagance of dreams, or "lay immersed in the insensibility of sleep, thy hand "recovered me from the temporary lethargy. Thy "hand set a new, a delicately-fine edge on all my "blunted *senses;* and strung my sinews with recruited vigour. When my thoughts were benumbed "and stupefied, thy quickening influence roused them "into activity; when they were disconcerted and wild, "thy regulating influence reduced them into order: "refitting me at once, to relish the innocent enter-

"tainments

" tainments of an *animal*, and to enjoy the ſublime
" gratifications, of a *rational* capacity.—When dark-
" neſs covered the creation, at thy command, the *ſun*
" aroſe; painted the flowers, and diſtinguiſhed every
" object; gave light to my feet, and gave nature,
" with all her beautiful ſcenes, to my eye.—To thee,
" O thou GOD of my ſtrength, I owe the *continuance*
" of my being, and the *vivacity* of my conſtitution.
" By thy ſacred order, without any conſciouſneſs of
" mine, the wheels of life move, and the crimſon
" fountain plays. *Over-ruled* by thy exquiſite ſkill, it
" transforms itſelf, by the niceſt operations of an in-
" explicable kind of chemiſtry, into a variety of the
" fineſt ſecretions: which glide into the muſcles, and
" ſwell them for action; or pour themſelves into the
" fluids, and repair their inceſſant decays: which
" cauſe chearfulneſs to ſparkle in the eye, and health
" to bloom in the cheek.

" *Diſaſtrous accidents*, injurious to the peace of my
" mind, or fatal to the welfare of my body, beſet my
" paths. But thy faithfulneſs and truth, like an im-
" penetrable ſhield, guarded me all around. Under
" this divine protection, I walked ſecure, amidſt legions
" of *apparent* perils; and paſſed unhurt, through a
" far greater multiplicity of *unſeen* evils. Not one of
" my bones was broken; not a ſingle ſhaft grazed up-
" on my eaſe; even when the eye that watched over
" me, ſaw, in its wide ſurvey, *thouſands falling beſide*
" *me*, in irrecoverable ruin: *and ten thouſands* deeply
" wounded, *on my right hand*.—If ſickneſs has, at any
" time, ſaddened my chamber, or pain harrowed my
" fleſh; it was a *wholeſome* diſcipline, and a *gracious*
" ſeverity. The chaſtiſement proved a ſovereign me-
" dicine, to cure me of an immoderate fondneſs for
" this imperfect troubleſome ſtate; and to quicken my
" deſires after the unembittered enjoyment of my e-
" ternal home.—Has not thy munificence, unwearied
" and unbounded, ſpread my *table;* and furniſhed it
" with the fineſt wheat; repleniſhed it with marrow

" and

" and fatneſs? While temperance ſweetened the bowl;
" appetite ſeaſoned the diſh; contentment and grati-
" tude crowned the repaſt.—Has not thy kindneſs,
" O GOD of the families of *Iſrael*, preſerved my af-
" fectionate *relations;* who ſtudy, by their tender
" offices, to ſoften every care, and heighten every
" joy? Has not thy kindneſs given me valuable *friends;*
" whoſe preſence is a cordial, to chear me in a de-
" jected hour; and whoſe converſation mingles im-
" provement with delight?

" When ſin lay diſguiſed amidſt flowery ſcenes of
" pleaſure; enlightened by thy wiſdom, I *diſcerned*
" the latent miſchief; made reſolute by thy grace, I
" *ſhunned* the luſcious bane. If, through the impulſe
" of ſenſuality, or the violence of paſſion, I have been
" hurried into the ſnare, and ſtung by the ſerpent;
" thy faithful admonitions have *recalled* the fooliſh
" wanderer; while the blood of thy Son has *healed*
" his deadly wounds.—Some, no doubt, have been
" cut off in the midſt of their iniquities; and tranſ-
" mitted from the thrillings of polluted joy, to the
" agonies of eternal deſpair. Whereas, I have been
" diſtinguiſhed by long-ſuffering mercy; and, inſtead
" of lifting up my eyes in torments, to behold a hea-
" ven irrecoverably loſt; I may lift them up under
" the pleaſing views of being admitted, ere long, into
" thoſe abodes of endleſs felicity.—In the mean time,
" thou haſt vouchſafed me the *revelation* of thy will;
" the influences of thy *Spirit;* and abundance of the
" moſt effectual *aids*, for advancing in knowledge,
" and growing in godlineſs; for becoming more con-
" formable to thy image, and more meet for thy pre-
" ſence; for taſting the pleaſures of religion, and ſe-
" curing the riches of eternity.

" How various is thy beneficence, O thou Lover of
" ſouls! It has unſealed a thouſand ſources of good;
" opened a thouſand avenues of delight; and heaped
" bleſſings upon me, with a ceaſeleſs liberality. If I

" ſhould attempt to declare them, they would be
" more than the *ſtarry* hoſt, which glitter in this un-
" clouded ſky; more than the *dewy* gems, which will
" adorn the face of the morning.

" And ſhall I *forget* the GOD of my ſalvation, the
" Author of all my mercies? Rather let my pulſe
" forget to beat!—Shall I render him *no* expreſſions
" of thankfulneſs? Then might all nature reproach
" my ingratitude.—Shall I reſt ſatisfied with the *bare*
" acknowledgment of my lips? No: let my life be
" vocal, and ſpeak his praiſe, in that only genuine,
" that moſt emphatical language,—the language of
" devout obedience. Let the *bill* be drawn upon my
" very heart; let all my affections *acknowledge* the
" draught; and let the whole tenor of my actions,
" in time and through eternity, be continually *paying*
" the debt,—the ever-pleaſing, ever-growing debt of
" duty, veneration, and love.

" And can I, O thou Guide of my goings, and
" Guardian of all my intereſts,—can I *diſtruſt* ſuch ſig-
" nal, ſuch experienced goodneſs? *Thou haſt been my*
" *Helper*, through all the buſy ſcenes of day: *therefore*
" *under the ſhadow of thy wings* will I repoſe myſelf,
" during the darkneſs, the danger, and death-like in-
" activity of the night. Whatever defilement I have
" contracted, waſh it thoroughly away in redeeming
" blood; and let neither the ſinful ſtain, nor the ſin-
" ful inclination, accompany me to my couch!—
" Then ſhall *I lay me down in peace, and take my reſt;*
" chearfully referring it to thy all-wiſe determina-
" tion, whether I ſhall open my eyes in *this* world,
" or awake in the unknown regions of *another*."

CON-

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

STARRY HEAVENS.

There dwells a noble pathos *in the skies,*
Which warms our passions, proselytes our hearts.
How eloquently shines *the glowing pole!*
With what authority it gives its charge,
Remonstrating great truths *in style sublime!*
Night-Thoughts, N° IX.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

STARRY HEAVENS.

THIS evening, I exchange the nice retreats of art for the noble theatre of nature. Inſtead of meaſuring my ſteps under the *covert* of an arbour, let me range along the *ſummit* of this gently-riſing hill. There is no need of the leafy ſhade, ſince the ſun has quitted the horizon, and withdrawn his ſcorching beams. But ſee, how advantages and inconveniencies are uſually linked, and chequer our affairs below! If the *annoying heat* ceaſes, the *landſcape*, and its pleaſing ſcenes, are alſo removed.—The majeſtic caſtle, and the lowly cottage, are vaniſhed together. I have loſt the aſpiring mountain, and its ruſſet brow; I look round, but to no purpoſe, for the humble vale, and its flowery lap. The plains whitened with flocks, and the heath yellow with furze, diſappear. The advancing night has wrapt in darkneſs the long-extended foreſt, and drawn her mantle over the windings of the ſilver ſtream. I no longer behold that luxuriant fertility in the fields; that wild magnificence of proſpect, and endleſs variety of images; which have

ſo

ſo often touched me with delight, and ſtruck me with awe from this commanding eminence.

The loſs, however, is ſcarcely to be regretted; ſince it is amply compenſated by the opening beauties of the ſky. Here I enjoy a free view of the whole hemiſphere; without any obſtacle from below, to confine the exploring eye; or any cloud from above, to overcaſt the ſpacious concave. 'Tis true, the lively vermilion, which ſo lately ſtreaked the chambers of the weſt, is all faded. But the *planets*, one after another, light up their lamps; the *ſtars* advance in their glittering train; a thouſand and a thouſand luminaries ſhine forth in ſucceſſive ſplendors; and the whole firmament is kindling into the moſt beautiful glow. The blueneſs of the æther, heightened by the ſeaſon of the year, and ſtill more enlivened by the *abſence* of the *moon*, gives thoſe gems of heaven the ſtrongeſt luſtre.

One pleaſure more, the invading gloom has not been able to ſnatch from my ſenſe. The night rather improves, than deſtroys, the fragrance which exhales from the *blooming beans*. With theſe the ſides of this ſloping declivity are lined; and with theſe the balmy zephyrs perfume their wings. Does *Arabia*, from all her ſpicy groves, breathe a more liberal, or a more charming gale of ſweets? And, what is a peculiar recommendation of the rural entertainments preſented in our happy land, they are alloyed by no apprehenſions of danger. No poiſonous ſerpent lurks under the bloſſom; nor any ravenous beaſt lies ready to ſtart from the thicket.—But I wander from a far more exalted ſubject. My thoughts, like my affections, are too eaſily diverted from the heavens, and detained by inferior objects. Away, my attention, from theſe little blandiſhments of the earth; ſince all the *glories* of the *ſky* invite thy regard.

We have taken a turn among the *Tombs*, and viewed the ſolemn memorials of the dead; in order to learn

learn the vanity of mortal things, and to break their ſoft inchantment.—We have ſurveyed the *ornaments* of the *Garden;* not that the heart might be planted in the parterre, or take root among the flowery race; but that theſe delicacies of a day might teach us to aſpire after a better paradiſe, where beauty never fades, and delight is ever in the bloom.—A third time we lighted the candle of meditation; and ſought for wiſdom, not in the crouded city, or wrangling ſchools, but in the ſilent and lonely *walks* of ancient *Night**.—Let us once more indulge the contemplative vein, and raiſe our ſpeculations to thoſe *ſublimer works* of the great Creator, which the regions of the ſky contain, and this duſky hour unveils†.

If we have diſcerned the touches of his pencil glowing in the colours of ſpring; if we have ſeen a ſample of his beneficence exhibited in the ſtores of nature, and a ray of his brightneſs beaming in the blaze of day; what an infinitely richer field for the diſplay of his perfections are the heavens! The *heavens*, in the moſt emphatical manner, declare the glory of GOD. The heavens are nobly eloquent of the Deity, and the moſt magnificent heralds of their Maker's praiſe. They ſpeak to the whole univerſe; for there is neither ſpeech ſo *barbarous*, but their language is underſtood; nor nation ſo *diſtant*, but their voices are heard among them‡.—Let me then, in this ſolemn ſeaſon, formed for thought, and a calm intercourſe with heaven; let me liſten to their ſilent lectures. Perhaps, I may receive ſuch impreſſive manifeſtations of "the eternal "power and Godhead," as may *ſhed* religion on my ſoul,

* Referring to the ſeveral ſubjects of the three preceding eſſays.

† Night opes the *nobleſt ſcenes*, and ſheds an awe
Which gives thoſe venerable ſcenes full weight,
And deep reception in th' entender'd heart.
Night-Thoughts, No IX.

‡ Pſal. xix. 2.

ſoul, while I walk the ſolitary ſhades; and may be a tutelary *friend* to my *virtue*, when the call of buſineſs, and the return of light, expoſe me again to the inroads of temptation.

THE *Iſraelites*, inſtigated by phrenzy rather than devotion, worſhipped the hoſt of heaven. And the pretenders to *judicial aſtrology* talk of I know not what myſterious efficacy, in the different aſpect of the ſtars, or the various conjunction and oppoſition of the planets.—Let thoſe who are unacquainted with the ſure word of revelation, give ear to theſe ſons of deluſion, and dealers in deceit. For my part, it is a queſtion of indifference to me, whether the conſtellations ſhone with ſmiles, or loured in frowns, on the hour of my nativity. Let CHRIST be my guard; and, ſecure in ſuch a protection, I would laugh at their impotent menaces. Let CHRIST be my *guide*; and I ſhall ſcorn to aſk, as well as deſpair of receiving, any predictory information from ſuch ſenſeleſs maſſes.—What! ſhall "the living ſeek to the dead *?" Can theſe bodies advertiſe me of future events, which are unconſcious of their own exiſtence? Shall I have recourſe to dull unintelligent matter, when I may apply to that all-wiſe Being; who, with one comprehenſive glance, diſtinctly views whatever is lodged in the boſom of immenſity, or forming in the womb of futurity? —Never, never will I ſearch for any intimations of my *fate*, but often trace my Creator's *footſteps* †, in yonder ſtarry plains. In the former caſe, they would be teachers

* Iſ. viii. 19.

† "It is moſt becoming" (ſays a great author) "ſuch imperfect creatures as we are, to contemplate the works of GOD, "with *this* deſign, that we may diſcern the manifeſtations of "wiſdom in them; and thereby excite in ourſelves thoſe devout affections, and that ſuperlative reſpect, which is the very eſſence of praiſe, as it is a reaſonable and moral ſervice." ABERNETHY *on the attributes*. And, indeed, if we are ſincerely

teachers of lies; in the latter, they are oracles of truth. In this therefore, this ſenſe only, I profeſs myſelf the pupil of the ſtars.

THE vulgar are apprehenſive of nothing more, than a multitude of *bright ſpangles* dropt over the æthereal blue. They have no higher notion of theſe fine appearances, than that they are ſo many *golden ſtuds*, with which the empyrean arch is decorated.—But ſtudious minds, that carry a more accurate and ſtrict inquiry among the celeſtial bodies, bring back advices of a moſt aſtoniſhing import. Let me juſt recollect the moſt material of thoſe *ſtupendous diſcoveries*, in order to furniſh out proper ſubjects for contemplation. And let the unlearned remember, that the ſcene I am going to diſplay, is the workmanſhip of that incomprehenſible GOD, who is "perfect in knowledge, "and mighty in power;" whoſe name, whoſe nature, and all whoſe operations, are "great and marvellous;" who ſummons into being, with equal eaſe, a ſingle grain, or ten thouſand worlds.—To this if we continually advert, the aſſertions, though they will certainly excite our *admiration*, need not tranſcend our belief.

THE earth is, in fact, a round body; however it may ſeem, in ſome parts, to be ſunk into vales, and raiſed

cerely diſpoſed to employ ourſelves in this excellent, this delightful duty of praiſing the infinite Creator; the *means*, and the *motives*, are both at hand. His works, in a wonderful and inſtructive variety, preſent themſelves, with pregnant manifeſtations of the moſt tranſcendent excellencies of their Maker. They pour their evidence from all quarters, and into all the avenues of the mind. They invite us, eſpecially in the magnificent ſyſtem of the univerſe, to contemplate—*counſel* conſummately wiſe, and *execution* inimitably perfect;—*power*, to which nothing is impoſſible; and *goodneſs*, which extendeth to all, which endureth for ever.—To give, not a full diſplay, but only ſome *ſlight ſtrictures*, of theſe glorious truths, is the principal ſcope of the following remarks.

raiſed into hills * ; in other parts, to be ſpread into a ſpacious plain, extending to the confines of the heavens, or terminated by the waters of the ocean.—We may fancy, that it has deep foundations, and reſts upon ſome prodigiouſly ſolid baſis. But it is *pendent* in the wide tranſpicuous æther, without any viſible cauſe to uphold it from above, or ſupport it from beneath.—It may ſeem to be ſedentary in its attitude, and motionleſs in its ſituation. But it is continually *ſailing* †, through the depths of the ſky ; and, in the ſpace of twelve months, finiſhes the mighty voyage. Which periodical rotation produces the ſeaſons, and completes the year.—As it proceeds in the annual circuit, it *ſpins* upon its own *centre ;* and turns its ſides alternately to the fountain of light. By which means, the *day* dawns in one hemiſphere ; while the night ſucceeds in the other. Without this expedient, one part of its regions would, during half the great revolution, be ſcorched with exceſſive heat, or languiſh under an unintermitted glare : while the other, expoſed to the contrary extremes, would be frozen to ice, and buried under a long oppreſſion of diſmal and deſtructive darkneſs.

I can-

* A learned writer, I think, Dr *Derham*, has ſomewhere an obſervation to this purpoſe :—That the loftieſt *ſummits* of hills, and the moſt enormous *ridges* of mountains, are no real objection to the *globular* or round form of the earth. Becauſe, however they may render it, to our limited ſight, vaſtly uneven and protuberant ; yet they bear no more proportion to the *entire* ſurface of the terraqueous ball, than a *particle* of duſt, caſually dropt on the mathematician's globe, bears to its whole circumference. Conſequently, the rotund figure is no more deſtroyed in the former caſe, than in the latter.—On the ſame principle, I have not thought it neceſſary, to take any notice of the comparatively ſmall difference between the *polar* and *equatorial* diameter of the earth.

† With what amazing *ſpeed*, this veſſel (if I may carry on the alluſion) filled with a multitude of nations, and freighted with all their poſſeſſions, makes her way through the æthereal ſpace ; ſee page 363. in note †.

I cannot forbear taking notice, that, in this compound motion of the earth, the one never *interferes* with the other, but both are perfectly *compatible*. Is it not thus with the precepts of religion, and the needful affairs of the present life; not excepting even the innocent gratifications of our appetites?—Some, I believe, are apt to imagine, that they must renounce society, if they devote themselves to CHRIST; and abandon all the satisfactions of *this* world, if they once become zealous candidates for the felicity of *another*.—But this is a very mistaken notion, or else a very injurious representation, of the doctrine which is according to godliness. It was never intended to drive men into deserts; but to lead them, through the peaceful and pleasant paths of wisdom, into the blissful regions of life eternal. It was never intended to strike off the wheels of business, or cut in sunder the sinews of industry; but rather, to make men industrious from a principle of *conscience*, not from the instigations of *avarice;* that so they may promote their immortal happiness, even while they provide for their temporal maintenance. It has no design to extirpate our passions, but only to restrain their irregularities; neither would it extinguish the delights of sense, but prevent them from evaporating into vanity, and subsiding into gall.—A person may be chearful among his friends, and yet joyful in GOD. He may taste the sweets of his earthly estate; and, at the same time, cherish his hopes of a nobler inheritance in heaven. The *trader* may prosecute the demands of commerce, without neglecting to negotiate the affairs of his salvation. The *warrior* may wear his sword; may draw, in a just cause, that murderous weapon; yet be a good soldier of JESUS CHRIST, and obtain the crown that fadeth not away. The *parent* may lay up a competent portion for his children, and not forfeit his title to the treasures, either of grace or of glory.—So far is Christianity from obstructing any valuable interest, or with-holding

any real pleasure; that it improves the one, and advances the other. Just as the diurnal and annual motions are so far from *clashing*, that they entirely *accord;* and instead of being destructive of each other, by mutually blending their effects, they give proportion and harmony to time, fertility and innumerable benefits to nature.

To us, who dwell on its surface, the earth is by far the *most extensive* orb, that our eyes can, any where, behold. It is also clothed with verdure; distinguished by trees; and adorned with a variety of beautiful decorations. Whereas, to a spectator placed on one of the planets, it wears an uniform aspect; looks all luminous, and *no larger* than a spot. To beings who dwell at still greater distances, it entirely disappears.—That which we call, alternately, the morning and the evening star; as in one part of her orbit, she rides foremost in the procession of night; in the other, ushers in, and anticipates the dawn; is a *planetary world.* Which, with the four others, that so wonderfully vary their mystic dance, are in themselves dark bodies, and shine only by reflection; have fields, and seas, and skies of their own; are furnished with all accommodations for *animal* subsistence, and are supposed to be the abodes of *intellectual* life. All which, together with this our earthly habitation, are dependent on that grand dispenser of divine munificence, the sun; receive their light from the distribution of his rays, and derive their comforts from his benign agency.

The *sun*, which seems to perform its daily stages through the sky, is, in this respect *, *fixed* and immoveable. 'Tis the great axle of heaven, about which the globe we inhabit, and other more spacious orbs, wheel their stated courses.—The sun, though seemingly

* I say, *in this respect;* that I may not seem to forget, or exclude, the revolution of the sun round its own axis.

by *ſmaller* than the *dial* it illuminates, is abundantly *larger* * than this whole *earth*; on which ſo many lofty mountains riſe, and ſuch vaſt oceans roll. A line, extending from ſide to ſide, through the centre of that reſplendent orb, would meaſure more than eight hundred thouſand miles: a girdle, formed to go round its circumference, would require a length of millions: were its ſolid contents to be eſtimated, the account would overwhelm our underſtanding, and be almoſt beyond the power of language to expreſs †.—Are we ſtartled at theſe reports of philoſophy? Are we ready to cry out, in a tranſport of ſurpriſe, How *mighty* is the Being, who kindled ſuch a prodigious fire; and keeps alive, from age to age, ſuch an enormous maſs of flame!—Let us attend our philoſophic guides, and we ſhall be brought acquainted with ſpeculations more enlarged and more amazing.

This ſun, with all its attendant planets, is but a very little part of the grand machine of the univerſe. Every *ſtar*, though, in appearance, no bigger than the diamond that glitters upon a lady's ring, is really a *vaſt globe*, like the ſun in ſize, and in glory, no leſs ſpacious, no leſs luminous, than the radiant ſource of our day. So that every ſtar is, not barely a world, but the *centre* of a magnificent ſyſtem; has a retinue of worlds, irradiated by its beams, and revolving round its attractive influence. All which are loſt to our ſight, in unmeaſurable wilds of æther.—That the ſtars

* A hundred thouſand times, according to the *loweſt* reckoning. Sir ISAAC NEWTON computes the ſun to be 900,000 times bigger than the earth. *Religious Philoſopher*, p. 749.

† Dr DERHAM, after having calculated the dimenſions of the planets, adds, "Amazing as theſe maſſes are, they are all "far outdone by that ſtupendous globe of light, the ſun; "which, as it is the fountain of light and heat to all the pla"nets about it, ſo doth it far ſurpaſs them all in its bulk: its "apparent diameter being computed at 822,148 *Engliſh* miles, "its ambit at 2,582,873 miles, and its ſolid contents at "290,971,000,000,000,000." *Aſtro-Theol.* book I. chap. II.

ſtars appear like ſo many diminutive, and ſcarce diſtinguiſhable *points*, is owing to their immenſe and inconceivable diſtance. Immenſe and inconceivable indeed it is; ſince a ball, ſhot from the loaded cannon, and flying, with unabated rapidity, muſt travel, at this impetuous rate, almoſt ſeven hundred thouſand years *, before it could reach the *neareſt* of thoſe twinkling luminaries.

Can any thing be more wonderful than theſe obſervations? Yes: there are truths far more ſtupendous; there are ſcenes far more extenſive. As there is no end of the almighty Maker's greatneſs; ſo no imagination can ſet limits to his creating hand.—Could you ſoar beyond the moon, and paſs through all the planetary choir; could you wing your way to the higheſt apparent ſtar, and take your ſtand on one of thoſe loftieſt pinnacles of heaven: you would, there, ſee *other ſkies* expanded; *another ſun*, diſtributing his inexhauſtible beams by day; *other ſtars*, that gild the horrors of the alternate night: and *other* †, perhaps nobler *ſyſtems*, eſtabliſhed; eſtabliſhed, in unknown profuſion, through the boundleſs dimenſions of ſpace. —Nor does the dominion of the univerſal Sovereign terminate *there*. Even at the end of this vaſt tour, you would find yourſelf advanced no farther than the ſuburbs of creation; arrived only at the frontiers of the great JEHOVAH's kingdom ‡.

And

* See *Religious Philoſopher*, p. 819.

† See *Aſtro-Theology*, book II. chap. II.———Where the author, having aſſigned various reaſons to ſupport this theory of our *modern aſtronomers*, adds,—"Beſides the forementioned ſtrong probabilities, we have this farther recommendation of ſuch an account of the univerſe, that it is far *more* magnificent, and worthy of the infinite *Creator*, than any other of the narrower ſchemes."

‡ *Job*, after a moſt beautiful diſſertation on the mighty works of GOD, as they are diſtributed through univerſal nature, from the heights of heaven, to the very depths of hell, cloſes

And do they tell me, that the ſun, the moon, and all the planets, are but a little part of HIS works? *How great*, then, *are his ſigns! and how mighty are his wonders* *!—And if ſo, what is the CREATOR himſelf! How far exalted above all praiſe! who is ſo *high*, that he looks down on the higheſt of theſe dazzling ſpheres, and ſees even the ſummit of creation in a vale: ſo *great*, that this prodigious extent of ſpace is but a point in his preſence; and all this confluence of worlds, as the lighteſt atom, that fluctuates in air, and ſports in the meridian ray †.

Thou

cloſes the magnificent account with this acknowledgment; *Lo! theſe are parts of his ways.* Or, as the original word more literally ſignifies, and may, I think, be more elegantly rendered, Theſe are only *the ſkirts*, the very outermoſt borders of his works. No more than a ſmall preface to the immenſe volume of the creation.—From the *Hebrew* קצות *extremitates*, I cannot forbear thinking on the extreme and very attenuated *fibres* of the root, when compared with the whole ſubſtance of the *trunk;* or on the exquiſitely ſmall ſize of the *capillary* veſſels, when compared with the whole ſtructure of the body. *Job* xxvi. 14.

* Dan. iv. 3.

† This puts me in mind of a very fine remark on a ſcriptural beauty, and a ſolid correction of the common tranſlation, made by that learned, ſagacious, and devout expoſitor *Vitringa.* —Iſ. xl. 15. we find it written of the Supreme Being, that *he taketh up the iſles as a very little thing.* Which, our critic obſerves, is neither anſwerable to the import of the original, nor conſonant to the ſtructure of the diſcourſe. The prophet had no intention to inform mankind, what the Almighty could *do* with regard to the iſlands, if he pleaſed to exert uncontrollaable power. His deſign was to ſhew how inſignificant, or rather what mere nothings *they are*, in his eſteem, and before his majeſty.—The iſlands, ſays he, tho' ſo *ſpacious*, as to afford room for the erection of kingdoms, and the abode of nations; tho' ſo *ſtrong*, as to withſtand, for many thouſands of years, the raging and reiterated aſſaults of the whole watery world; are yet, before the adored JEHOVAH, *ſmall* as the minuteſt grain, which the eye can ſcarce diſcern; *light* as the feathered mote, which the leaſt breath hurries away like a tempeſt.—

Thou moſt ſublime and incomprehenſibly glorious GOD, how am I overwhelmed with awe! how ſunk into the loweſt proſtration of mind! when I conſider thy "*excellent greatneſs*," and my own utter inſignificancy!—And have I, exceſſively mean as I am, have I entertained any *conceited apprehenſions* of myſelf? Have I felt the leaſt elatement of thought, in the preſence of ſo majeſtic and adorable a Being? How ſhould this wound me with ſorrow, and cover me with confuſion! —O my GOD, was I poſſeſſed of all the *high perfections*, which accompliſh and adorn the angels of light; amidſt all theſe noble endowments, I would fall down in the *deepeſt abaſement* at thy feet. Loſt in the infinitely ſuperior blaze of thy uncreated glories, I would confeſs myſelf to be nothing; to be leſs than nothing, and vanity.—How much more ought I to maintain the moſt unfeigned humiliation, before thy divine Majeſty; who am not only duſt and aſhes, but a compound of ignorance, imperfection, and depravity!

WHILE, beholding this vaſt expanſe, I learn my own extreme meanneſs, I would alſo diſcover the abject littleneſs of all *terreſtrial things*.—What is the earth, with all her oſtentatious ſcenes, compared with this aſtoniſhingly grand furniture of the ſkies? What, but a dim *ſpeck*, hardly perceivable in the map of the univerſe? It is obſerved by a very judicious writer *, That if the ſun himſelf, which enlightens this part of the creation, was extinguiſhed; and all the hoſt of planetary worlds, which move about him, were annihilated; they would not be miſſed, by an eye that can take in the whole compaſs of nature, any more than a grain of ſand upon the ſea-ſhore. The bulk of which they conſiſt, and the ſpace which they occupy, is ſo exceedingly

אוים כדק וסול *Inſulæ ſunt ut leve quid, quod avolat. The* deep-rooted *iſlands are as the volatile atom, which*, by the gentleſt undulations of the air, *is wafted to and fro in perpetual agitation.*

* Spect. vol. VIII. No 565.

ly little in compariſon of the whole, that their loſs would ſcarce leave a blank in the immenſity of GOD's works.—If then, not our globe only, but this whole ſyſtem, be ſo very diminutive; what is a kingdom, or a county? What are a few *lordſhips*, or the ſo much admired *patrimonies* of thoſe who are ſtyled wealthy *? When I meaſure them with my own little pittance, they ſwell into proud and bloated dimenſions: But, when I take the univerſe for my ſtandard, how ſcanty is their ſize, how contemptible their figure! They ſhrink into *pompous nothings* †.

When the keen-eyed eagle ſoars above all the feathered race, and leaves their very ſight below; when ſhe wings her way, with direct aſcent, up the ſteep of heaven; and, ſteadily gazing on the meridian ſun, accounts its beaming ſplendors all her own: does ſhe then regard, with any ſolicitude, the *mote* that is flying in the air, or the *duſt* which ſhe ſhook from her feet? And ſhall this eternal mind, which is capable of contemplating its Creator's glory, which is intended to enjoy the viſions of his countenance; ſhall this *eternal mind*, endued with ſuch great capacities, and made for ſuch exalted ends, be ſo *ignobly ambitious*, as to ſigh for the tinſels of ſtate; or ſo *poorly covetous*, as to graſp after ample territories on a needle's point? —No; under the influence of ſuch conſiderations, I feel my ſentiments expand, and my wiſhes acquire a turn of ſublimity. My throbbing deſires after worldly grandeur die away; and I find myſelf, if not poſſeſſed of power, yet ſuperior to its charms.—Too long, muſt I own, have my affections been pinioned by vanity, and immured in this earthly clod. But theſe thoughts break the *ſhackles* ‡. Theſe objects open the door of *liberty*.

* *Juvat inter ſidera vagantem divitum pavimenta ridere, et totam cum auro ſuo terram.* SEN.

† *Terrellæ grandia inania.* WATTS's Hor. lyr.

‡ The ſoul of man was made to walk the ſkies,
Delightful outlet of her priſon here!

liberty. My soul, fired by such noble prospects, weighs anchor from this little nook; and coasts no longer about its contracted shores; dotes no longer on its painted shells. The *immensity* of things is her range; and an *infinity* of bliss is her aim.

BEHOLD this immense expanse, and admire the *condescension* of thy GOD.—In this manner, an inspired and princely astronomer improved his survey of the nocturnal heavens. *When I consider thy heavens, even the works of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained;* I am smitten with wonder at thy glory, and cry out in a transport of gratitude, *LORD, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him*†? "How amazing, how charming, is that divine benignity, "which is pleased to bow down its sacred regards to "so foolish and worthless a creature! yea, disdains "not, from the height of infinite exaltation, to extend its kind providential care to our most minute "concerns!—This is amazing. But that the everlasting "Sovereign should give his Son, to be made flesh, and "become our Saviour! shall I call it a *miracle* of condescending goodness? Rather, what are all miracles, "what are all mysteries, to this ineffable gift!"

Had the *brightest archangel* been commissioned to come down, with the olive-branch of peace in his hand, signifying his eternal Maker's readiness to be reconciled; on our bended knees, with tears of joy, and a torrent of thankfulness, we ought to have received the transporting news. But when, instead of such an angelic envoy, he sends his *only-begotten Son*, his Son beyond

> There, disencumber'd from her chains, the ties
> Of toys terrestrial, she can rove at large;
> There freely can respire, dilate, extend,
> In full proportion let loose all her pow'rs.
>
> *Night-Thoughts*, N° IX.

* Psal. viii. 3, 4.

beyond all thought illuſtrious, to make us the gracious overture:—ſends him from the "habitation of his "holineſs and glory," to put on the *infirmities* of mortality, and dwell in a tabernacle of clay:—ſends him, not barely to make us a tranſient viſit, but to abide *many years* in our inferior and miſerable world:—ſends him, not to exerciſe dominion over monarchs, but to wear out his life in the ignoble form of a *ſervant;* and, at laſt, to make his exit under the infamous character of a *malefactor!* Was ever love like this? Did ever grace ſtoop ſo low *? ?—Should the ſun be ſhorn of all his radiant honours, and degraded into a *clod* of the valleys; ſhould all the dignitaries of heaven be depoſed from their thrones, and degenerate

* This reminds me of a very noble piece of *ſacred oratory*, where, in a fine ſeries of the moſt beautiful gradations, the apoſtle diſplays the admirably-condeſcending kindneſs of our Saviour.—*He thought it no robbery*, it was his indiſputable right, *to be equal with* the infinite, ſelf-exiſtent, immortal *GOD. Yet*, in mercy to ſinners, *he emptied himſelf* of the incommunicable honours, *and* laid aſide the robes of incomprehenſible glory.—When he entered upon his mediatorial ſtate, inſtead of acting in the grand capacity of univerſal Sovereign, he *took upon him the form of a ſervant:* and not the form of thoſe miniſtering ſpirits, whoſe duty is dignity itſelf; who are throned, tho' adoring.—He took not on him the nature of angels, but ſtooped incomparably low; aſſumed a body of animated duſt, *and was made in the likeneſs of men;* thoſe inferior *and* depraved creatures.—Aſtoniſhing condeſcenſion! but not ſufficient for the overflowing richneſs of the Redeemer's love. *For, being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf* farther ſtill; occupied the loweſt place, where all was low *and* ignoble. He not only ſubmitted to the yoke of the law, but alſo bore the infirmities, and miniſtered to the neceſſities of mortals. He even waſhed the feet of others, and had not where to lay his own head.—Yea, he carried his meritorious humiliation to the very deepeſt degrees of poſſible abaſement. He *became obedient unto death;*—and not to a common or natural death, but a death more infamous than the gibbet; more torturous than the rack;—*even the* accurſed *death of the croſs.* Phil. ii. 6, 7. 8.

nerate into *insects* of a day; great, great would be the abasement. But *nothing* to thine, most blessed JESUS; *nothing* to thine, thou Prince of peace; when, for us men, and for our salvation, thou didst not abhor the coarse accommodations of the *manger;* thou didst not decline even the gloomy horrors of the *grave*.

'Tis well, the sacred oracles have given this doctrine the most explicit confirmation, and evidence quite incontestable. Otherwise, a favour so undeserved, so unexpected, and rich beyond all imagination, might stagger our belief.—Could HE, who launches all these planetary globes, thro' the illimitable void; and leads them on, from age to age, in their extensive career; could HE resign his hands, to be *confined* by the girding cord, and his back to be *ploughed* by the bloody scourge?—Could HE, who crowns all the stars with inextinguishable *brightness*, be himself defiled with *spitting*, and disfigured with the thorny scar? It is the greatest of wonders, and yet the surest of truths.

O! ye mighty orbs, that roll along the spaces of the sky; I wondered, a little while ago, at your vast dimensions, and ample circuits But now my amazement ceases; or rather, is entirely swallowed up by a much more stupendous subject. Methinks, your enormous bulk is shrivelled to an *atom;* your prodigious revolutions are contracted to a *span;* while I muse upon the far more elevated heights, and unfathomable depths; the infinitely more extended lengths, and unlimited breadths *of* this *love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS* †.

CONTEMPLATING this stately expanse, I see a mirror, which represents, in the most awful colours, the *hainousness* of human *guilt*.—Ten thousand volumes, wrote on purpose to display the aggravations of my various acts of disobedience, could not so effectually convince me of their inconceivable enormity, as the consideration

† Eph. iii. 18, 19.

tion of that *all-glorious person* *, who, to make an atonement for them, spilt the last drop of his blood.—*I have sinned*, may every child of *Adam* say; *and what shall I do unto thee, O thou Observer of men* †? Shall I give my first born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul; Vain commutation! and such as would be rejected by the blessed GOD, with the utmost abhorrence.—Will all the *potentates*, that sway the sceptre in a thousand kingdoms, devote their royal and honoured lives, to rescue an obnoxious creature from the stroke of vengeance? Alas! it must cost more, incomparably more, to expiate the malignity of sin, and save a guilty wretch from hell.—Will all the *principalities* of *heaven* be content to assume my nature, and resign themselves to death for my pardon ‡? Even

* *Quo quisque altius ascendit in agnitione* CHRISTI, *eo profundius peccati atrocitatem cognoscet.*

† *Job* vii. 20. Not *preserver*, as it stands in our version, but *observer of men*. Which phrase, as it denotes the exact and incessant *inspection* of the divine eye: as it intimates the absolute impossibility, that any transgression should *escape* the divine notice; is evidently most proper, both to assign the *reason*, and heighten the *emphasis* of the context.

‡ MILTON sets this thought in a very poetical and striking light.—All the sanctities of heaven stand round the throne of the Supreme Majesty. GOD foresees and foretels the fall of man; the *ruin* which will unavoidably ensue on his transgression; and the utter *impossibility* of his being able to extricate himself from the abyss of misery.

He, with his whole posterity, must die;
Die he, or justice must; unless for him
Some other able, and as willing, pay
The rigid satisfaction, death for death.

After which affecting representation, intended to raise the most tender emotions of pity, the following inquiry is addressed to all the surrounding angels:

Say, heav'nly powers, where shall we find such love?
Which of you will be mortal, to redeem

Man's

Even this would be too mean a satisfaction for inexorable justice; too scanty a reparation of GOD's injured honour. So flagrant is human guilt, that nothing but a victim of *infinite dignity* could constitute an adequate propitiation.—*He* who said, "Let there be light, "and there was light;" Let there be a firmament, and immediately the blue curtains floated in the sky; *He* must take flesh; HE must feel the fierce torments of crucifixion; and pour out his soul in agonies, if ever such transgressors are pardoned.

How vast is that debt, which all the wealth of both the *Indies* cannot discharge! How vitiated that habit of body, which all the drugs produced by nature herself, cannot rectify! But how much more *ruined* was thy condition, O my soul! how much more *hainous* were thy crimes! Since nothing less than the sufferings and death of Messiah, the Son of GOD, and radiant image of his glory, could effect thy recovery, or cancel thy iniquity.—Though perhaps thou art not sunk so very deep in pollution, as some of the most abandoned profligates; yet remember the inestimable ransom paid to redeem thee from everlasting destruction. Remember this; and "never open thy mouth "any

> *Man's mortal crime? and die, the dead to save?*
> *He ask'd; but all the heav'nly choir stood mute,*
> *And silence was in heav'n.—*

There is, to me at least, an inimitable spirit and beauty in the last circumstance.—That such an innumerable multitude of generous and compassionate beings, should be struck *dumb* with surprise and terror, at the very mention of *the deadly forfeiture and ransom set!* No *language* is so eloquent as this *silence*. Words could not possibly have expressed, in so emphatical a manner, the *dreadful nature* of the task; the *absolute inability* of any or all creatures to execute it; the supereminent and *matchless love* of the eternal Son, in undertaking the tremendous work; not only without reluctance, but unsought and unimplored; with readiness, alacrity, and delight, *Paradise Lost*, book III. line 209. Edit. BENTL.

"any more *," either to *murmur* at the divine chaſtiſements, or to *glory* in thy own attainments. Remember this; and even "*loath* thyſelf† for the mul-"titude of thy provocations," and thy great baſeneſs.

ONCE more: let me view this beautiful, this magnificent expanſe; and conceive ſome juſter apprehenſions of the unknown richneſs of my *Saviour's atonement*.—I am informed by a writer who cannot miſtake, that the High Prieſt of my profeſſion, who was alſo the ſacrifice for my ſins, is *higher than the heavens* ‡; more exalted in dignity, more bright with glory, than all the heavenly manſions, and all their illuſtrious inhabitants. If my heart was humbled at the conſideration of its exceſſive guilt, how do all my drooping powers revive at this delightful thought? The poor criminal, that ſeemed to be *tottering* on the very brink of the infernal pit, is *raiſed*, by ſuch a belief, even to the portals of paradiſe. My ſelf-abaſement, I truſt, will always continue; but my fears, under the influence of ſuch a conviction, are quite gone‖. I do not, I can-

* Ezek. xvi. 63. † Ezek. xxxvi. 31. ‡ Heb. vii. 26.

‖ I am ſorrow to find, that ſome of my readers were a little diſguſted at this expreſſion, "*My fears are quite gone*;" as thinking, it diſcovered a tincture of arrogance in the writer, and tended to diſcourage the weak Chriſtian. But, I hope, a more mature conſideration will acquit me from both theſe charges.—For what has the author ſaid? Only, that at ſome *peculiarly happy* moments, when the Holy Ghoſt bears witneſs of CHRIST in his heart, and he is favoured with a glimpſe of the Redeemer's matchleſs excellency;—that, in theſe *brighter intervals* of life, his trembling fears, with regard to the deciſive ſentence of the great tribunal, are turned into pleaſing expectations. And what is there in ſuch a declaration offenſive to the *ſtricteſt* modeſty, or diſpiriting to the *weakeſt* believer? Inſtead of creating diſcouragement, it points out the way to obtain a ſettled tranquillity. Its natural tendency is, to engage the ſerious mind in a more conſtant and attentive meditation on the unknown merits of the Divine MEDIATOR. And were

I cannot, doubt the efficacy of this propitiation. *While I see a* glimpse of its matchless excellency, and *verily believe* myself interested in its merits; I know not what it is to feel any misgiving suspicions; but am stedfast in faith, and joyful through hope.

Be my iniquities like debts of millions of talents, here is more than full payment for all that prodigious sum. Let the enemy of mankind, and accuser of the brethren, load me with invectives; this one plea, *A divine Redeemer died*, most thoroughly quashes every indictment. For, though there be much turpitude, and manifold transgressions, "there is no condemnation "to those that are in CHRIST JESUS."—Nay, were I chargeable with all the vilest deeds, which have been committed in every age of the world, by every nation of men; even in this most deplorable case, I need not sink into despair. Even such guilt, though grievous beyond all expression, is not to be compared with that *abundance* of *grace* and righteousness, which dwell in the incarnate Divinity.—How great, how transcendently glorious, are the *perfections* of the adored JEHOVAH! So great, so superlatively precious, is the *expiation* of the dying JESUS. 'Tis impossible for the human mind to *exalt* this atonement * too highly; 'tis impossible for the HUMBLE PENITENT to *confide* in it too steadily.

were we more *thoroughly* acquainted, more *deeply* affected, with his unutterable dignity; I am persuaded, our uneasy apprehensions would *proportionably* vanish; our faith be established, our hopes brightened, and our joys enlarged.

* This doctrine, though rich with *consolation* to the ruined sinner; yet is it not likely to open a door for *licentiousness*, and embolden transgressors to prosecute their VICES?—No: it is the most powerful motive to that genuine repentance, which *flows* from an unfeigned love of GOD; and *operates* in a hearty detestation of all sin. One, who knew the unmeasurable goodness of the Lord, and was no stranger to the single perverseness of our nature, says, *There is mercy with thee:* THEREFORE *shalt thou be feared.* Psal. cxxx. 4.—Words full to my

dily. The ſcriptures, the ſcriptures of eternal truth, have ſaid it, (exult, my ſoul, in the belief of it!) that the blood on which we rely, is GOD's *own blood* *; and therefore all-ſufficient to expiate, omnipotent to ſave.

David, that egregious ſinner, but more exemplary ſaint, ſeems to have been well acquainted with this comfortable truth. What elſe can be the import of that very remarkable, but moſt devout declaration? *Thou ſhalt purge me* ‡ *with hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean: thou ſhalt waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than ſnow.*— "I have been guilty, I muſt confeſs, of the moſt com- "plicated and ſhocking crimes: crimes, inflamed by "every aggravating circumſtance, with regard to "myſelf, my neighbour, and my GOD. *Myſelf*, who "have been bleſſed above men, and the diſtinguiſhed "favourite of providence; *my neighbour*, who, in the "moſt dear and tender intereſts, has been irrepara- "bly injured; *my GOD*, who might juſtly expect the "moſt grateful returns of duty, inſtead of ſuch enor- "mous violations of his law. Yet, all horrid and "execrable as *my offence* is, it is nothing to the ſu- "perabundant merit of that *great Redeemer*, who was "promiſed from the foundations of the world; in "whom all my fathers truſted; who is the hope of "all the ends of the earth. Tho' my conſcience be "more loathſome, with adulterous impurity, than the "*dunghill;* tho' treachery and murder have rendered "it

my purpoſe; which at once add the *higheſt* authority to this ſentiment, and direct our minds to its proper influence, and due improvement.

* Acts xx. 28.

‡ *Pſal.* li. 7. *Thou ſhalt purge.* I prefer this tranſlation before the new one. Becauſe this ſpeaks the language of a more ſtedfaſt belief, and gives the higheſt honour to the divine goodneſs. Were the words intended to bear no more than the common *petitionary* ſenſe, and not to be expreſſive of a noble *plerophory* of faith; they would rather have been תחטאני and תכבסני *imperatives*, not *futures*.

" it even black as the gloom of *hell;* yet, washed in " the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness *, " I shall be,—I say not, pure only, this were a dispa- " ragement to the efficacy of my Saviour's death; but " I shall be fair as the *lily*, and white as the snow. " Nay, let me not derogate from the glorious object " of my confidence; cleansed by this sovereign sanc- " tifying stream, I shall be *fairer* than the full-blown " lily, *whiter* than the new-fallen snows."

POWER, saith the scripture, *belongeth unto GOD* †.—And in what majestic lines is this attribute of JEHOVAH written, throughout the whole volume of the creation? especially, thro' those magnificent pages, unfolded in yonder starry regions; which are therefore styled, by the sweet and seraphic singer of *Israel*, " the " firmament of his power ‡;" because the grand *exploits* of *omnipotence* are there displayed with the utmost pomp, and recorded in the most legible characters.

Who, that looks upward to the midnight-sky; and, with an eye of reason, beholds its rolling wonders; who can forbear inquiring, Of *what* were those mighty orbs *formed?*—Amazing to relate! they were produced without materials. They sprung from emptiness itself. The stately fabric of universal nature emerged out of *nothing*.—What *instruments* were used by the supreme Architect, to fashion the parts with such exquisite niceness, and give so beautiful a polish to the whole? How was all connected into one finely-proportioned, and nobly-finished structure?—A *bare Fiat* accomplished all. LET THEM BE, said GOD. He added no more; and immediately the marvellous edifice arose; adorned with every beauty; displaying innumerable perfections; and declaring, amidst enraptured seraphs, its great Creator's praise. " By the *word* of the LORD " were the heavens made, and all

* Zech. xiii. 1. † Psal. lxii. 11. ‡ Psal. cl. 1.

all the hosts of them by the *breath* of his mouth *."
—What forceful machinery *fixed* some of those ponderous globes on an immovable basis? What irresistible impulse *bowled* others through the circuit of the heavens? What coercive energy *confined* their impetuous courses within limits astonishingly large, yet most minutely true?—Nothing but his *sovereign will*. For all things were at first constituted, and all to this day abide, "according to his ordinance."

Without any toilsome assiduity or laborious process, to raise—to touch—to *speak* such a multitude of immense bodies into being;—to *launch* them thro' the spaces of the sky, as an arrow from the hand of a giant;—to impress on such *unwieldy* masses a motion far outstripping the swiftness of the winged creation †;—and to *continue* them in the same rapid whirl, for thousands and thousands of years:—what an amazing instance of infinite might is this!—Can any thing be impossible to the LORD, the LORD GOD; the Creator and Controller of all the ends of the earth, all the regions of the universe? Rather, is not all that we count *difficult*, perfect ease to that glorious Being, who

* If this thought is admitted a second time, and suffered to ennoble the next paragraph; it is partly, because of its unequalled *sublimity*; partly, because it awakens the most *grand* idea of creating power; and partly, because the practice of the *Psalmist*, an authority too great to be controverted, is my precedent.—The beautiful stanza quoted from *Psal.* xxxiii. 6. is a proof, how thoroughly the royal poet entered into the majesty of the *Mosaic* narration. The repetition of the sentiment, *ver.* 9. intimates, how peculiarly he was charmed with that *noble manner* of describing the divine operations. While the turn of his own composition shews, how perfectly he possessed the same *elevated way* of thinking. And this, long before *Longinus* wrote the celebrated treatise, which has taught the Heathen, as well as the Christian world, to admire the *dignity* of the *Jewish* legislator's style. *Vid* LONGIN. *de Sublim* sect. IX.

† To give *one* instance of this remark.—The earth, in the diurnal revolution, which it performs on its own axis, *whirls*

who only ſpake, and the world was made * ? who only gave command, and the ſtupendous axle was lodged faſt, the lofty wheels moved complete ?—What a ſure defence, O my ſoul, is this everlaſting ſtrength of thy GOD ! Be this thy continual *refuge*, in the article of danger ; this thy never-failing *reſource*, in every time of need.

What cannot this uncontrollable power of the great JEHOVAH effect for his people ? Be their miſeries ever ſo galling, cannot this GOD relieve them ? Be their wants ever ſo numerous, cannot this GOD ſupply them ? Be their corruptions within ever ſo inveterate, or their temptations without ever ſo importunate ; cannot this mighty, mighty GOD ſubdue the former, and fortify them againſt the latter ?—Should *Trials*, with an inceſſant vehemence, ſift thee as wheat ; ſhould *Tribulation*, with a weight of woes, almoſt grind thee to powder ; ſhould *Pleaſure*, with her bewitching ſmiles, ſolicit thee to delicious ruin ; yet " hold thee faſt by " GOD," and lay thy help upon him that is omnipotent †. Thou canſt not be involved in ſuch calamitous

about at the rate of above a thouſand miles an hour. And as the great orbit which it deſcribes annually round the ſun, is reckoned at 540 millions of miles, it muſt *travel* near a million and a half each day.—What a *force* muſt be requiſite, to protrude ſo vaſt a globe ; and wheel it on, loaded as it is with huge mountains, and ponderous rocks, at ſuch a prodigious degree of rapidity ! It ſurpaſſes human conception !—How natural, how pertinent, how almoſt neceſſary, after ſuch an obſervation, is the acknowledgment made by holy *Job*, *I know that* THOU *canſt do every thing*, *and that no thought*, no imaginable ſcheme, *can be with-holden from thee*, can lye beyond thy power to execute. Chap. xlii. 2.

* Pſal. xxxiii. 9.

† It is a moſt charming deſcription, as well as a moſt comfortable promiſe, which we find in *Iſ.* xl. 29, 30, 31.—*HE giveth power to the feeble*, *and to them that have no might* at all, *he* not only imparteth, but *increaſeth ſtrength* ; making it to

tous circumstances, or exposed to such imminent peril; but thy GOD, whom thou servest, is able to deliver thee from the one, and to support thee under the other. To *support!* to *deliver!* let me not dishonour

to abound, where it did not so much as exist.—Without this aid of JEHOVAH, *even the youths*, amidst the very prime of their vigour and activity, *shall become languid* in their work, *and weary* in their course. *And the young men*, to whose resolution and abilities nothing seemed impracticable, *shall* not only not succeed, but *utterly fall*, and miscarry in their various enterprises.—*Whereas they that wait upon the LORD*, and confide in his grace, shall press on, with a generous ardor, from one degree of religious improvement to another. Instead of exhausting, they *shall renew their strength*; difficulties shall animate, and toil invigorate them. *They shall mount up*, as *with* soaring *wings*, above all opposition; they shall be carried through every discouragement, *as eagles* cleave the yielding air. *They shall ruin*, with speed and alacrity, the way of GOD's commandments, *and not be weary: they shall hold on* (יצעדו *progredientur, carpent iter*) with constancy and perseverance, in those peaceful paths, *and not faint*; but arrive at the end of their progress, and receive the prize of their high calling.

To this most chearing doctrine, permit me to add its no less beautiful and delightful *contrast*. *Eliphaz*, speaking of the enemies of the righteous, says—לא נכחד קימנו—which is rendered by a great critic in sacred learning, *Nihil excisum factio nobis adversaria*.—We should reckon our language acquitted itself tolerably well, if, when depretiating the abilities of an adversary, it should represent them weak as the *scorched thread*, feeble as the *dissolving smoke*. But these are cold forms of speech, compared with the eloquence of the east. According to the genius of our Bible, *all the power that opposes the godly, is* a mere nothing; or, to speak with a more emphatical air of contempt, *a destroyed, an extirpated nothing*.—Admire this expression, ye that are charmed with daring images, and (what *Tully* calls *verbum ardens*) a spirited and glowing diction. —Remember this declaration, ye that fight the good fight of faith. The united force of all your enemies, be it ever so formidable to the eye of flesh, is before your almighty Guardian, *nihil nihilissimum*, not only nothing, but *less than nothing*, and vanity. *Job* xxii. 20.

nour the unlimited greatneſs of his power. He is able to exalt thee, from the deepeſt diſtreſs, to the moſt triumphant joy; and to make even a complication of evils work together for thy everlaſting good. *He is able*, not only to accompliſh what I have been ſpeaking, but *to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can aſk or think* *.

O! the *wretched condition* of the wicked, who have this LORD of all power for their enemy! O! the *deſperate madneſs* of the ungodly, who provoke the Almighty to jealouſy!—Beſotted creatures! are you able to contend with your Maker, and enter the liſts againſt incenſed Omnipotence? Can you *bear* the fierceneſs of his wrath, or ſuſtain the vengeance of his lifted arm? At his preſence, though awfully ſerene, the hills melt like wax, and the "mountains ſkip like frighted "lambs." At the leaſt intimation of his diſpleaſure, the foundations of nature rock, and the "pillars of "heaven tremble." How then can a withered leaf endure, when "his lips are full of indignation, and "his tongue as a devouring fire?"—Or can any thing *ſcreen* a guilty worm, when the great and terrible GOD ſhall *whet his glittering ſword, and his hand take hold on* inexorable

* I ſhould, in this place, avoid ſwelling the notes any farther, was it not to take notice of the inimitable paſſage quoted above, and to be found *Eph.* iii. 20.—Which, if I do not greatly miſtake, is the moſt complete repreſentation of divine power, that it is poſſible for words to frame.—To do all that our tongue can *aſk*, is a miracle of might. But we often think more than we can expreſs, and are actuated with "*groan-*"*ings unutterable.*" Yet to anſwer theſe vaſt deſires, is not beyond the accompliſhment of our heavenly Father.—Nay, to make his gifts and his bleſſings commenſurate to the *largeſt ſtretch* of human expectations, is a ſmall thing with the GOD of glory. He is able to do *above all* that the moſt enlarged apprehenſion can imagine; yea, to do *abundantly* more, *exceeding abundantly* more, than the mind itſelf, in the utmoſt exertion of all its faculties, is capable of *wiſhing*, or knows how *to conceive*.

inexorable *judgment?* when *that hand*, which ſhoots the planets, maſſes of exceſſive bulk *, with ſuch ſurpriſing rapidity, through the ſky: *that hand*, which darts the comets to ſuch unmeaſurable diſtances, beyond the orbit of our remoteſt planet, beyond the purſuit of the ſtrongeſt eye: when THAT HAND is ſtretched out to puniſh, can the munition of rocks, the intervention of ſeas, or even interpoſing worlds, divert the blow?—Conſider this, *Ambition;* and bow thy haughty creſt. Conſider this, *Diſobedience;* and bend thy iron ſinew. O! conſider this, all ye that forget, or affront, the tremendous JEHOVAH. He can, by a ſingle act of his will, lay the univerſe in utter ruin: and can he want power to bring *you*, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to the duſt of death, or to the flames of hell? He has—I ſay not, ten thouſand lightnings to ſcorch you to aſhes; ten thouſand thunders to cruſh you into atoms; but, what is unſpeakably more dreadful,—he has an *army* of terrors, even in the *look* of his angry countenance. His very frown is worſe than deſtruction.

I cannot diſmiſs this ſubject, without admiring the *patience* of the bleſſed GOD; who, though ſo ſtrong and powerful, yet "is provoked every day."—Surely, as is his majeſty, ſo is his mercy; his pity altogether commenſurate to his power. If I vilify but the name of an earthly monarch, I loſe my liberty, and am confined to the dungeon. If I appear in arms, and draw the ſword, againſt my national ſovereign; my

* One of the planets (*Saturn*) is ſuppoſed to be more than 90 times as big as the globe on which we live. According to the ſame calculation, the largeſt of the planets (*Jupiter*) is above 200 times vaſter, than this vaſt collection of ſpacious foreſts, towering mountains, extenſive continents, and boundleſs oceans.—Such enormous magnitude! winged with ſuch prodigious ſpeed!—It raiſes aſtoniſhment beyond expreſſion.—*With GOD is terrible majeſty!* Job xxxvii. 22.—*Who ſhall not fear* THEE, O LORD, *and glorify thy name?* Rev. xv. 4.

my life is forfeited, and my very blood will ſcarce atone for the crime. But thee I have diſhonoured, O! thou King immortal and inviſible! Againſt thee my breaſt has fomented *ſecret diſaffection;* my behaviour has riſen up in *open rebellion;* and yet I am ſpared, yet I am preſerved. Inſtead of being baniſhed from thy preſence, I ſit at thy table, and am fed from thy hand. Inſtead of purſuing me with *thunder-bolts* of vengeance, thy *favours* ſurround me on every ſide. That arm, that injured arm, which might juſtly fall, with irretrievable ruin, on a traitor's head, is moſt graciouſly ſtretched out, to careſs him with the tendereſt endearments, to cheriſh him with every inſtance of parental kindneſs!—O! thou mightieſt, thou beſt of beings, how am I pained at my very ſoul, for ſuch ſhameful and odious diſingenuity! Let me always abominate myſelf, as the baſeſt of creatures: but *adore* that unwearied long-ſuffering of thine, which refuſes to be irritated; *love* that unremitted goodneſs, which no acts of ingratitude could ſtop, or ſo much as check, in its gracious current.—O! let this ſtubborn heart, which duty could not bind, which threatenings could not awe, be the captive, the *willing captive*, of ſuch triumphant beneficence.

I HAVE often been ſtruck with wonder at that almighty ſkill, which *weighed* the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a balance; which *proportioned* the waters in the hollow of its hand, and *adjuſted* the duſt of the earth * by a meaſure. But how much more marvellous

* *If.* xl. 12. *The duſt of the earth*, in this ſublime ſcripture, ſignifies the dry land, or *ſolid* part of our globe; which is placed in contradiſtinction to the whole collection of *fluid* matter, mentioned in the preceding clauſe—Perhaps, this remarkable expreſſion may be intended to intimate, not only the extreme niceneſs, which ſtated the dimenſions of the world *in general*, or in the groſs; but alſo that *particular exactneſs*, with which the

lous is that magnificent œconomy, which *poised* the ſtars with inexpreſſible nicety, and *meted* out the heavens with a ſpan? where all is prodigiouſly vaſt; immenſely various; and yet more than mathematically exact. Surely the *wiſdom* of GOD manifeſts itſelf in the ſkies, and ſhines in thoſe lucid orbs; ſhines on the contemplative mind, with a luſtre incomparably brighter than that which their united ſplendors tranſmit to the eye.

Behold yonder countleſs multitude of globes; conſider their amazing magnitude; regard them as the ſovereigns of ſo many ſyſtems, each accompanied with his planetary equipage. Upon this ſuppoſition, what a multiplicity of mighty ſpheres muſt be perpetually running their rounds, in the upper regions! Yet none miſtake their way, or *wander* from the goal, though they paſs through trackleſs and unbounded fields. None *fly off* from their orbits, into extravagant excurſions; none *preſs in* upon their centre, with too near an approach. None *interfere* with each other in their perennial paſſage, or *intercept* the kindly communications of another's influence*. But all their rotations

the very ſmalleſt materials that conſtitute its frame, (not excepting each individual atom,) were calculated and diſpoſed.—*q. d.* 'Tis a ſmall thing to ſay, No ſuch enormous redundancies, as unneceſſary ridges of mountains, were ſuffered to ſubſiſt. There was not ſo much as the leaſt grain of ſand *ſuperfluous*, or a ſingle particle of duſt *deficient*.—As the grand aim of the deſcription is, to celebrate the *conſummate wiſdom*, exemplified in the creation; and to diſplay that *perfect proportion*, with which every part tallies, coincides and harmonizes, with the whole; I have taken leave to alter the word of our *Engliſh* tranſlation *comprehend*, and to introduce in its ſtead a term, equally faithful to the *Hebrew*, and more ſignificative of the prophet's preciſe idea.

* The interception of light, by means of an eclipſe, happens very *rarely*. And then it is of ſo *ſhort* a continuance, as not to be at all inconvenient. Nay, it is attended with ſuch *circumſtances*, as render it rather uſeful, than prejudicial.

rotations proceed in eternal harmony; keeping such time, and observing such laws, as are most exquisitely adapted to the perfection of the whole.

WHILE I contemplate this "excellent wisdom, "which made the heavens," and attunes all their motions; how am I abashed at that mixture of arrogance and folly, which has, at any time, inclined me to murmur at thy *dispensations*, O LORD! What is this, but a sort of implicit treason against thy supremacy, and a tacit denial of thy infinite understanding?—Hast thou so regularly placed such a wonderful diversity of systems, through the spaces of the universe?—didst thou, without any probationary essays, without any improving retouches, speak them into the most consummate perfection?—dost thou continually superintend all their circumstances, with a sagacity that never mistakes the minutest tittle of propriety? And shall I be so unaccountably stupid, as to question the *justness* of thy *discernment*, in "chusing my inheritance, and "fixing the bounds of my habitation!"—Not a single erratum, in modelling the structure, determining the distance*, and conducting the career of *unnumbered* worlds! And shall my peevish humour presume to censure thy interposition, with regard to the affairs of *one* inconsiderable creature; whose stature, in such a comparative view, is less than a span, and his present duration little more than a moment?

O!

* The sun in particular, (and let this serve as a specimen of that most curious exactness, with which the other celestial bodies are constituted and all their circumstances regulated,) the sun is formed of such a determinate magnitude, and placed at such a convenient distance,—"as not to annoy, but only re-"fresh us, and nourish the ground with its kindly warmth. "If it was *larger*, it would set the earth on fire; if *smaller*, "it would leave it frozen. If it was *nearer* us, we should be "scorched to death; if *farther* from us, we should not be "able to live for want of heat."

STACKHOUSE's *History of the Bible.*

O! THOU GOD, "in whose hand my breath is, "and whose are all my ways," let such sentiments as now possess my thoughts, be always lively on my heart! These shall compose my mind into a *chearful* acquiescence, and a *thankful* submission; even when afflictions gall the sense, or disappointments break my schemes. Then shall I, like the grateful patriarch *, in all the changes of my condition, and even in the depths of distress, erect an *altar* of adoring resignation, and inscribe it with the apostle's *motto*, TO GOD ONLY WISE. Then, shouldst thou give me leave to be the carver of my own fortunes, I would humbly desire to relinquish the grant, and recommit the disposal of myself to thy unerring beneficence. Fully persuaded that *thy counsels*, tho' contrary to my froward inclinations, or even afflictive to my flesh, are incomparably more eligible than the blind impulse of my own will, however soothing to animal nature.

ON a careless inspection, you perceive no accuracy or uniformity in the position of the heavenly bodies. They appear like an *illustrious chaos;* a promiscuous heap of shining globes; neither ranked in order, nor moving by line.—But what *seems* confusion, *is* all regularity. What carries a show of negligence, is really the result of the most masterly contrivance. You think, perhaps, they rove in their æreal flight; but they rove by the nicest rule, and without the least error. Their circuits, though seemingly devious; their mazes, tho' intricate to our apprehensions †; are marked out, not indeed with golden compasses, but by the infinitely more exact determinations of the all-wise Spirit.

So,

* See *Gen.* xii. 7, 8.

† — —Mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolv'd; yet regular
Then most, when most irregular they seem. MILT.

So, what wears the *appearance* of calamity, in the allotments appointed for the godly, has really the *nature* of a bleſſing. It iſſues from fatherly love, and will terminate in the richeſt good. If *Joſeph* is ſnatched from the embraces of an indulgent parent, and abandoned to ſlavery in a foreign land; it is in order to ſave the holy family from periſhing by famine; and to preſerve "the ſeed, in whom all the nations of the earth "ſhould be bleſſed." If he falls into the deepeſt diſgrace, it is on purpoſe that he may riſe to the higheſt honours. Even the confinement of the priſon, by the unſearchable workings of providence, opens his way to the right hand of the throne itſelf.—Let the moſt afflicted ſervant of JESUS wait the final upſhot of things. He will *then* diſcover the apparent expediency of all thoſe tribulations, which *now*, perhaps, he can hardly admit without reluctance, or ſuffer without ſome ſtruggles of diſſatisfaction. Then the guſhing tear, and the heaving ſigh, will be turned into tides of gratitude, and hymns of holy wonder.

In the mean time, let no audacious railer preſumptuouſly impeach the divine procedure; but, adoring where we cannot comprehend, let us expect the *evolution* of the myſterious plan. Then ſhall every eye perceive, that the ſeeming labyrinths of providence, were the moſt *direct* and *compendious* way, to effect his general purpoſes of grace, and to bring about each one's particular happineſs *.—Then, alſo, ſhall it be clearly ſhewn, in the preſence of applauding worlds, why Virtue pined in want, while Vice rioted in affluence; why amiable innocence ſo often dragged the dungeon-*chain*, while horrid Guilt trailed the *robe* of ſtate.—That day of univerſal audit, that day of everlaſting retribution, will not only *vindicate*, but *magnify*, the whole management

* — — The *moral world*,
Which, though to us it ſeems embroil'd, moves on
In higher order; fitted, and impell'd
By *wiſdom*'s fineſt hand, and iſſuing all
In gen'ral good. THOMS. *Wint.* l. 586. laſt edit.

ment of Heaven. The auguſt ſeſſions ſhall cloſe with this unanimous, this glorious acknowledgment: "Though *clouds and darkneſs*, impenetrable by any human ſcrutiny, *were* ſometimes *round about* the ſupreme "Conductor of things; yet *righteouſneſs and judgment* "*were the* conſtant *habitation of his ſeat** ; the invariable ſtandard of all his adminiſtrations."—Thus (if I may illuſtrate the grandeſt truths by inferior occurrences) while we view the arras on the ſide of *leaſt diſtinction*, it is void of any elegant fancy; without any nice ſtrokes of art; nothing but a confuſed jumble of incoherent threads. No ſooner is the piece beheld in its *proper aſpect*, but the ſuſpected rudeneſs vaniſhes, and the moſt curious arrangement takes place. We are charmed with deſigns of the fineſt taſte, and figures of the moſt graceful form. All is ſhaped with ſymmetry; all is clad in beauty.

THE *goodneſs* of GOD is moſt eminently diſplayed in the ſkies.—Could we take an underſtanding ſurvey of whatever is formed by the divine Architect, throughout the whole extent of *material* things; our minds would be tranſported with their excellencies, and our tongues echo back that great encomium, They are "good, very good†." Moſt *beautiful*‡ in themſelves; contrived by unerring wiſdom, and executed with inimitable ſkill. Moſt *uſeful* ‡ in their functions; exactly fitting

* Pſal. xcvii. 2. † Gen. i. 31.

‡ ‡ This καλοκαγαθια of the univerſe, and all its parts, has been very highly, and very juſtly extolled, by the ancient inquirers into nature; and was indeed, an illuſtrious ſcene ſpread before the ſages of the Heathen world, wherein to contemplate the goodneſs and the glories of the Supreme Being.—It was nobly ſaid by a Pagan philoſopher, on this occaſion; Εις ερω τα μεταβληθηναι τον Θεον μελλοντα δημιουργειν. *That GOD, when he undertook the work of creation, transformed himſelf into love.*—But he need not *transform* himſelf into this amiable principle; for "GOD "*is* love;" as was much more nobly ſaid by one, whom that *philoſopher* would have termed a *barbarian*. 1 *John* iv. 8.

fitting the places they fill, and completely anſwering the purpoſes for which they were intended.—All the parts of the inanimate creation proclaim, both by their intrinſic and relative excellencies, the all-diffuſive beneficence of their Maker.

How much more wonderful are the diſplays of divine indulgence, in the worlds of life! Becauſe dead matter is incapable of delight, therefore the gracious Creator has raiſed innumerable ranks of *perceptive exiſtence;* ſuch as are qualified to taſte his bounty, and enjoy each a happineſs ſuited to its peculiar ſtate. With this view, he furniſhed the regions of inferior nature with an order and a ſeries of ſenſitive beings. The *waters* teem with ſhoals of finny inhabitants. The *dry land* ſwarms with animals of every order. The dwellings of the *firmament* are occupied by multitudes of winged people. Not ſo much as a *green leaf*, philoſophers ſay, but lodges and accommodates its puny animalcule tenants*.—And wherefore this diverſity

* A very celebrated poet, in a beautiful paragraph on this ſubject, informs his readers, that all nature ſwarms with life. In ſubterranean *cells*, the earth heaves with vital motion. Even the hard ſtone, in the very inmoſt receſſes of its impenetrable citadel, holds multitudes of animated inhabitants. The *pulp* of mellow fruit, and all the productions of the orchard, feed the inviſible nations. Each *liquid*, whether of acid taſte, or milder reliſh, abounds with various forms of ſenſitive exiſtence. Nor is the pure *ſtream*, or tranſparent *air*, without their colonies of unſeen people.—In which conſtitution of things, we have a wonderful inſtance, not only of the divine goodneſs to thoſe minute beings, in giving them a *capacity* for animal gratifications; but of his tender care for mankind, in making them *imperceptible* to our ſenſes.

— —Theſe, conceal'd
By the kind art of forming Heav'n, eſcape
The groſſer eye of man: for if the worlds
In worlds incloſ'd ſhould on his ſenſes burſt;
From cates ambroſial, and the nectar'd bowl,

He'd

verſity, this profuſion of living creatures, flying the air, treading the ground, and gliding through the paths of the ſea? For this moſt glorious reaſon:—That the eternal Sovereign may exerciſe his ſuperabundant goodneſs; that his *table* may be furniſhed with millions and millions of *gueſts*; that he may fill, every hour, every moment, their mouths with food, or their hearts with gladneſs.

But what a ſmall theatre are three or four *elements* for the operations of JEHOVAH's bounty! His magnificent liberality ſcorns ſuch ſcanty limits. If you aſk, Wherefore has he created *all worlds*, and repleniſhed them with an unknown multiplicity of beings, riſing, one above another, in an endleſs gradation of ſtill richer endowments, and ſtill nobler capacities? The anſwer is,—For the manifeſtation of his own glory, and eſpecially for the *communication* of his inexhauſtible beneficence *.—The great Creator could propoſe no advange to himſelf. His bliſs is incapable of any addition. "Before the mountains were brought "forth, or ever the earth and the world were made," he was ſupremely happy in his own independent and all-ſufficient ſelf. His grand deſign therefore, in erecting ſo many ſtately fabrics, and peopling them with ſo many tribes of inhabitants, was, to *transfuſe* his

He'd turn abhorrent; and, in dead of night,
When ſilence ſleeps o'er all, be ſtunn'd with noiſe.
THOMSON's *Summer*.

* A ſacred writer, conſidering this delightful ſubject, and confining his obſervation within the *narrow limits* of his own country, cries out, with a mixture of amazement and gratitude, *How great is his goodneſs, and how great is his beauty!*—Who then can forbear being loſt in wonder, and tranſported with delight, when he extends his ſurvey to thoſe infinitely more *copious communications* of divine bounty; which, like ſalutary and refreſhing ſtreams, run through all worlds; and make, not only the *little valleys* of a ſingle kingdom, but the immenſity of creation *laugh, and ſing?* Zech. ix. 17.

his exuberant kindness, and *impart* felicity in all its forms. Ten thousand worlds, stocked with ten thousand times ten thousand ranks of sensitive and intelligent existence, are so many spacious gardens, which, with rivers of communicated joy, this ever-flowing fountain waters continually.

Boundless *, and (which raises our idea of this divine principle to the very highest degree of perfection) disinterested * munificence! How inexpressibly amiable is the blessed GOD, considered in this charming light! Is it possible to conceive any excellence so adorable and lovely, as infinite benevolence, guided by unerring wisdom, and exerting almighty power, on purpose to make a whole universe happy?—O my soul, what an *irresistible attractive* is here! What a most worthy object, for thy most fervent affection! Shall now every glittering toy become a rival to this transcendently-beneficent Being, and rob him of thy heart?—No. Let his all-creating arm teach thee to trust in the fulness of his sufficiency:—let his all-superintending eye incline thee to acquiesce in the dispensations of his Providence:—and let his bounty, so freely vouchsafed, so amply diffused, induce thee to *love* him, with all the ardor of a grateful and admiring soul; induce thee to *serve* him, not with a joyless awe, or slavish dread, but with unfeigned alacrity, and a delightful complacency.

If the goodness of GOD is so admirably seen in the works of nature, and the favours of Providence; with what a noble superiority does it *even triumph* in the *mystery* of *redemption* †! Redemption is the brightest

* * In this sense, *there is none good, but One, that is GOD.* None universally and essentially good: none, whose goodness extends itself, in an infinite *variety* of blessings, to *every* capable object; or, who always dispenses his favours, from the *sole* principle of *free* and disinterested benevolence.

† In this, and in other parts of the *Contemplations*, the reader will observe, that the attributes of the DEITY are represented

eſt mirror, in which to contemplate this moſt lovely attribute of the Deity. Other gifts are only as *mites* from the divine treaſury; but redemption opens, I had almoſt ſaid exhauſts, all the *ſtores* of indulgence and grace. Herein "GOD *commendeth* his love *:" not only manifeſts, but ſets it off, as it were, with every bright and grand embelliſhment: manifeſts it in ſo ſtupendous a manner, that it is beyond parallel; beyond thought; "above all bleſſing and praiſe."—Was he not thy *Son*, everlaſting GOD, thy *only* Son; the Son of thy boſom from eternal ages; the higheſt object of thy complacential delight! Was not thy love to this adorable Son, incomparably greater than the tendereſt affection of *any*, or the united affections of *all*, mortal parents! Was not the bleſſed JESUS more illuſtrious in excellency than all angels; more exalted in dignity than all heavens! Yet didſt thou reſign HIM for poor mortals; for vile ſinners!—Couldſt thou ſee him deſcend from his royal *throne;* and take up his abode in the ſordid *ſtable?* ſee him forego the *homage* of the ſeraphim; and ſtand expoſed to the reproachful *indignities* of an inſolent rabble? ſee him arraigned at the bar, and ſentenced to death; numbered with malefactors,

ſented as ſhining with more diſtinguiſhed luſtre in the wonders of *redemption*, than in the works of *creation*. If *ſuch* remarks ſhould ſeem to be unprecedented, or to ſtand in need of a vindication; permit me to ſubjoin the ſentiments of a great critic equally verſed in *both* thoſe ſublime theories.—"In a perfect "orator," he ſays, "*Tully* requires ſome ſkill in the nature "of heavenly bodies; becauſe his mind will become more ex- "tenſive and unconfined; and, when he deſcends to treat of "human affairs, he will both think and write in a more exalt- "ted and magnificent manner. For the ſame reaſon, that "excellent maſter would have recommended the ſtudy of thoſe "great and glorious myſteries, which revelation has diſcover- "ed to us; *to which the nobleſt parts of this ſyſtem of the "world are as much inferior, as the creature is leſs excellent "than the Creator.* *Spect.* vol. VIII. N° 633.

* Rom. v. 8.

factors, and nailed to the gibbet; bathed in his own innocent blood, and pouring out his soul in agonies of sorrow?—Could the Father, the Father *himself*, with unknown philanthropy *, say? "It shall, it shall, be "so! My pity to rebellious man pleads, and prevails. "Awake, therefore, O *sword* †, edged with divine "wrath; awake; and be sheathed in that *immaculate* "breast; pierce that *dearly-beloved* heart. I am con- "tent, that my Son endure the sharpness of death, "rather than sinful mortals perish for ever."—Incomprehensible love! May it henceforward be the favourite subject of my *meditation;* more delightful to my musing mind, than applause to the ambitious ear! May it be the darling theme of my *discourse;* sweeter to my tongue, than the droppings of the honey-comb to my taste! May it be my choicest *comfort*, through all the changes of life; and my reviving *cordial*, even in the last extremities of dissolution itself!

A *prophet* contemplating, with a distant survey, this unexampled instance of almighty love, is wrapt into a *transport* of *devotion*. At a loss for proper acknowledgments, he calls upon the whole universe to aid his labouring breast, and supply his lack of praise. *Sing melodiously, ye* vaulted *heavens; exult, and even leap for gladness, thou* cumberous *earth; ye mountains*, break your long silence, and *burst into peals of loudest acclamation* ‡: *for the* LORD, by this precious gift, and this

* *Philanthropy*, that is, loving-kindness to man.

† Zech. xiii. 7.

‡ *Is.* xlix. 13.—I have not adhered to our common translation, but endeavoured to preserve, somewhat more faithfully, the noble *pathos*, and inimitable *energy*, of the sacred original.—The love of GOD manifested in a divine and dying Saviour, is a blessing of such inconceivable richness, as must render all acknowledgments *flat*, and all encomiums *languid*. Yet, I think, the most poetical and most emphatical celebration of that unspeakable instance of goodness, is contained in this rapturous

this great ſalvation, *hath comforted his people.*—A *ſacred hiſtorian* hath left it upon record, that, at the firſt exhibition of this raviſhing ſcene, there was with the angel who brought the bleſſed tidings, a multitude of the heavenly hoſt, praiſing GOD, and making the concave of the ſkies reſound with their Hallelujahs. At the dawn of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, when he was beginning to riſe with healing in his wings, the *morning-ſtars* ſang together, and all the *ſons* of *GOD* ſhouted for joy.—And ſhall *man*, whom this gracious diſpenſation principally reſpects; ſhall *man*, who is the centre of all theſe gladdening rays; ſhall he have no heart to adore, no anthem to celebrate, this

Love without end, and without meaſure grace?

MILT.

How *pure* is the ſtate of the ſky, and how *clear* its aſpect! Clearer than the limpid ſtream; purer than the tranſparent cryſtal; and more curiouſly fine than the poliſhed mirror. That *ſtately ceiling*, fretted with gold, and ſtretched to an extent of many millions of leagues, is not disfigured with a ſingle flaw. That *azure canopy*, embroidered with ſtars, and ſpacious enough to form a covering for unnumbered worlds, is without the leaſt ſpot or wrinkle.—Yet this, even this, will ſcarce yield us ſo much as a faint repreſentation of the *divine purity*. GOD is a GOD of matchleſs and tranſcendent excellency. His ways are uprightneſs itſelf. His counſels and words are the very ſanctity of wiſdom and of truth. The *laws* which he has given to univerſal nature, are exquiſitely contrived, and beyond all poſſibility of improvement. The *precepts* which he has appointed for the human race, are a com-

rapturous exclamation of the prophet. Which intimates, with a wonderful majeſty of ſentiment, that even the whole compaſs of the *inanimate creation*, could it be ſenſible of the benefit, and capable of delight, would expreſs its *gratitude*, in all theſe demonſtrations of the moſt lively and exuberant joy.

a complete ſummary of all that is honourable in itſelf, and perfective of the rational mind.—Not the leaſt *overſight*, in planning a ſeries of events for all futurity. Not the leaſt mal-adminiſtration, in managing the affairs of every age, ſince time began; and of every nation under the whole heavens.—Pardon theſe diſparaging expreſſions. A *negative* perfection is far, far beneath thy dignity, *O thou Moſt Higheſt* *. In all theſe inſtances; in all thy acts, and all thy attributes; thou art not only holy, but "*glorious* in *holineſs*."

So inconceivably holy is the LORD GOD of hoſts, that he ſees *defilement* even in the *brightneſs* of the firmament. The living ſapphire of the heavens, before his

* *O thou Moſt Higheſt.*—This expreſſion occurs more than once in the pſalms uſed by the eſtabliſhed church. It is, I think, one of thoſe *beauties*, which, becauſe often exhibited, generally eſcape our notice. It is a *ſuperlative* formed on a ſuperlative; and, though not ſtrictly conformable to grammatical rules, is nobly ſuperior to them all.—The language ſeems to be ſenſible of its own deficiency, when the incomprehenſible JEHOVAH is addreſſed, or celebrated. Oppreſſed, as it were, with the glories of the ſubject, it labours after a *more emphatical* manner of diction, than the ordinary forms of ſpeech afford.—It is, if I rightly judge, one of thoſe daring and happy peculiarities of a maſterly genius, which Mr POPE ſo finely deſcribes; and, while he deſcribes, exemplifies:

> Great wits ſometimes may *gloriouſly offend*,
> And *riſe* to *faults* true critics dare not mend;
> From vulgar bounds with brave diſorder part,
> And ſnatch a grace beyond the reach of art.
> *Eſſay on Criticiſm.*

St *Paul*'s—ελαχιστοτερος παντων των αγιων—is a beautiful paſſage of the like nature. Which our tranſlators have very properly rendered, *leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints.*—His πολλῳ μαλλον χρειτσον is another inſtance of the ſame kind. But here the *Engliſh* verſion fails. *Far better* is extremely *flaccid*, compared with the *nervous* original. And I greatly queſtion, whether it is poſſible to tranſlate the ſentence, with equal conciſeneſs, and with equal ſpirit. See *Eph.* iii. 8. *Phil.* i. 23.

his majesty, loses its lustre. *Yea, the stars* (though the most pure and resplendent part of the heavens) *are not pure in his sight. How much less man, who*, in his fallen and depraved state, *is* but *as a worm*, that crawls in the corrupted carcase; *and the son of man, who*, by reason of his manifold actual impurities, *is* too justly compared to *an insect*, that wallows amidst stench and putrefaction* !—Is there not then abundant cause, for the most irreproachable and eminent of mankind, to renounce all arrogant pretensions; to lay aside every assuming air; to take nothing but *shame* and confusion to themselves? A holy prophet, and a holy prince, felt such humbling impressions, from a glimpse of the uncreated purity. *I abhor myself in dust and ashes* †, was the declaration of the one;

* *Job* xxv. 5, 6. I submit it to the judgment of the learned, whether this is not the true meaning of the text.—It may not perhaps recommend itself to the *squeamishly-nice* critic; or to those persons who dream of, I know not what, *dignity* in our fallen nature. But it seems, in preference to every other interpretation, *suitable* to the sacred context; and is far, far from being *injurious* to the character of that apostate race, which is "altogether become abominable," and "is as an un-"clean thing."—On this supposition, there is not only an apparent, but a very striking contrast, between the purity of GOD, and the pollution of man: the *purity* of the most high GOD, which outshines the moon, and eclipses the stars; the *pollution* of degenerate man, which, exclusive of a Saviour, would render him as loathsome to the all-seeing eye, as the vilest vermin are in ours.—Without assigning this sense to the passage, I cannot discern the force of the *antithesis*, nor indeed the *propriety* of the sentiment. Worms, in the general, give us an idea of *meanness* and *infirmity*; not of *defilement* and *impurity*: unless they are insects, hatched amidst putrefaction, and considered in such noisome circumstances.—The two words of the original, רמה and תולעת are evidently used in this signification, by *Moses* and *Isaiah*: by the former, to denote the vermin which devoured the *putrified* manna; by the latter, to express the reptiles which swarm in the body that sees *corruption*. *Exod.* xvi. 20. *Is.* xiv. 11.

† Job xlii. 6.

one; *I am a man of unclean lips* *, the confeſſion of the other.—Should not this teach us all to adore the divine mercies, for that precious *purifying fountain* †, which was foretold from the foundation of the world, but was opened at that awful juncture, when knotty whips tore the fleſh; when ragged thorns mangled the temples; when ſharpened nails cut freſh ſluices for the cimſon current; when the gaſh of the ſpear compleated the dreadful work, and *forthwith flowed there*, from the wounded heart, *blood and water*?

Eſpecially, ſince GOD himſelf ſaw no blemiſh in his *dear Son*. *He looketh to the moon, and it ſhineth not*: yet his all-penetrating and jealous eye diſcerned nothing amiſs, nothing defective, in our glorious Redeemer. Nothing amiſs! He bore this moſt illuſtrious teſtimony concerning his holy child JESUS: "In him I am "*pleaſed*; I am *well pleaſed*; I acquieſce, with entire "complacency, and with the higheſt delight, in his "perſon; his undertaking; and the whole execution "of his office."—How ſhould this thought enliven our hopes, while the other mortifies our pride? Should not our hearts ſpring within us, and even leap for joy, at the repeated aſſurance given us by revelation, that ſuch a divinely-excellent perſon is our Mediator? What apparent reaſon has every believer to adopt the bleſſed virgin's exclamation! "*My ſoul doth magnify* "*the LORD* for his tranſcendent mercy; *and my* "*ſpirit rejoices*, not in wide-extended harveſts, wa- "ving over my fertile glebe ‡, not in armies vanquiſh- "ed, and leaving the peculiar treaſure of nations ‡ "for

* Iſ. vi. 5.

† *In that day there ſhall be a fountain opened to the houſe of* David, *and to the inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *for ſin and uncleanneſs*. Zech. xiii. 1.

‡ ‡ The inſpired penman, from theſe two occaſions of diſtinguiſhed joy, ſets forth the incomparably *greater delight*, which ariſes from the gift of a Saviour, and the bleſſing of redemption. *Iſ.* ix. *ver.* 3. compared with *ver.* 6.

" for my ſpoil; but in an infinitely richer, nobler bleſ-
" ſing, even in *GOD my Saviour.*"—That a perſon ſo ſublime and perfect, has vouchſafed to become my *Surety;* to give himſelf for my *Ranſom*, in the world below; and act as my *Advocate*, in the royal preſence above; yea, to make *my* recovery the reward of his ſufferings; *my* final felicity, the honour of his mediatorial kingdom!

When an innumerable multitude * of bodies, many of them more than a *hundred thouſand miles* in diameter †, are all ſet in motion;—when the orbits, in which they perform their periodical revolutions, are extended at the rate of ſeveral hundreds of *millions;* —when each has a *diſtinct* and ſeparate ſphere for finiſhing his vaſt circuit;—when no one knows what it is to be cramped; but each moſt *freely expatiates* in his unbounded career;—when every one is placed at ſuch an *immenſe remove* from each other, that they appear to their reſpective inhabitants, only as ſo many ſpots of light;—how aſtoniſhing muſt be the expanſe, which yields *room* for all thoſe mighty globes, and their widely-diffuſed operations! To what prodigious lengths did the almighty Builder ſtretch his line, when he marked out the ſtupendous platform?—I wonder at ſuch an immeaſurable extent. My very thoughts are loſt in this abyſs of ſpaces. But be it known to mortals, be it never forgot by ſinners, that, in all its moſt ſurpriſing amplitude, it is *ſmall*, it is *ſcanty*, compared with the bounty and the mercy of its Maker.

His

* This refers not only to the planets which paſs and repaſs about our ſun, but alſo to the other planetary worlds, which are ſuppoſed to attend the ſeveral fixed ſtars.

† The diameter of *Jupiter* is calculated at 130,650 miles, while its orbit is reckoned to conſiſt of 895,134,000. Which computation, according to the maxims of aſtronomy, and the laws of proportion, may, as is taken for granted in the Contemplations, be applied to *other planets* revolving round *other ſuns.*

His *bounty* is absolutely without limits *, and without end. The most lavish generosity cannot exhaust, or even diminish, his munificence. O! all ye tribes of men, or rather, all ye classes of intelligent creatures, ye are not straitened in the *liberality* of your ever-blessed Creator; be not straitened in your own *expectations*. "Open your mouth wide, and he shall fill "it," with copious and continual draughts from the cup of joy. Your GOD, on whom is your whole dependence, is more than able, is more than willing, to "supply all your need, according to his riches in glo-"ry."—When the LORD JEHOVAH is the giver, and his grace † the gift; let your wishes be unbounded, and your cravings unsatiable. All that created beings can possibly *covet*, is but a very small pittance of that unknown happiness, which the everlasting Benefactor is ready to *bestow*. Suppose every charitable disposition which warms the hearts of the human race, added to those more enlarged affections which glow in heavenly bosoms; what were they all, even in their highest exercise, compared with the benignity of the divine nature? —Bless *me* then, thou eternal Source of love; bless *all* that

* By *bounty*, I mean, not the actual exercise, or the sensible effects, of this excellency in the Deity. These *are*, and always *must be*, through the immense perfection of the attribute, and the necessary scantiness of the recipient, bounded. But I would be understood, as speaking of the divine *power*, and the divine *will*, to exert divine beneficence. These can have no real, no imaginable limits. These, after a profusion of blessings, distributed to unnumbered worlds, continued through unnumbered ages, must *still* have more to bestow; for *ever* have more to bestow; *infinitely* more to bestow, than it is possible for creation itself to receive.

† 2 *Cor.* ix. 8. *God is able to make* all *grace* abound *towards you, that ye, having* all sufficiency *in* all things, *may* abound *to* every *good work*.—How beautiful and emphatical is this description! inferior to nothing, but that extent of ability, and those riches of liberality, which it so eloquently celebrates. Does it not *exhaust* all the powers of language, while it attempts to give us a *specimen* of the munificence of the LORD?

that reverence thy holy name; according to thy own moſt profuſe goodneſs; whoſe great prerogative it is to diſdain all meaſure. O! bleſs us, in proportion to that grace; the richneſs of which (unutterable by the tongues of men, and of angels) was once *ſpoken* in the groans, and *written* in the wounds, of thy expiring Son!

Spacious indeed are theſe heavens! Where do they begin? Where do they end? What is their extent? Can angels anſwer my queſtion? Have angels travelled the vaſt circuit? can angels meaſure the bounds of ſpace? No; 'tis boundleſs, 'tis unknown, 'tis amazing all.—How charming then to reflect, that the *mercy* of GOD is "greater than the heavens;" is more extenſive than the dimenſions of the ſky. Tranſporting reflection! Let me indulge thee once more *. Let me think over the delightful diſplays of this lovely attribute; and, while I admire the *trophies* of forgiving goodneſs, add one to the number.—With what amiable and affecting colours is this repreſented in the *parable* of the *prodigal!* What could induce that fooliſh youth to forſake his father's houſe? Had he not been tenderly cheriſhed by the good parent, and loaded with benefits from his indulgent hand? Were not the reſtraints of parental government an eaſy yoke? or rather, a *preſervative* from *ruin?* Notwithſtanding every endearing obligation, he revolts from his duty; and launches into ſuch ſcandalous

* *Once more* refers to page 142, of *Reflections on a Flower-Garden.*—The following pages, to the 390th, exhibit a *digreſſive* view of the divine mercy. I thought it proper to appriſe my reader of this excurſion; though, I hope, it will be needleſs to offer an apology for enlarging upon a theme incomparably joyous. Who can complain of *tediouſneſs*, while I ſpeak conſolation to diſtreſſed, and recovery to ruined creatures? The divine mercy is the ſole fountain of all our preſent and future bleſſings. In conformity to this benign attribute, human hopes ariſe, and human felicity flows. Who, therefore, can be weary of *viewing* and *reviewing*, when the lengths and breadths of forgiving grace are the raviſhing proſpect?

lous irregularities as were dishonourable to his family, and destructive to himself.—When necessity, not choice, but sharp necessity drove him to a submissive return; does the injured father stand aloof, or shut his doors? Quite the reverse. He espies him, while he is yet a *great way off;* and, the moment he beholds the profligate youth, he *has compassion on him.* His bowels yearn; they "sound like an harp," touched with notes divinely soft. He never once thinks of his ungracious departure, and infamous debaucheries. Pity, parental pity, passes an act of oblivion; and, in one instant, cancels a series of long-continued provocations.—So strong are the workings of fatherly affection, that he is almost impatient to embrace the naked and destitute wretch. The son's pace is slow, *He arose and came;* the father's is swift, He sprung forth (aged as he was) and *ran.* And is there a single frown in his brow, or one upbraiding word on his tongue?—Instead of loathing the sordid creature, or reproaching him for his odious excesses; he *falls* on his *neck*, clasps him in his arms, and hugs him to his bosom. Instead of disowning the riotous spendthrift, or rejecting him for his undutiful behaviour; he receives and welcomes him with *kisses* of delight. He rejoices at his return from extravagance and vice, as he formerly rejoiced on the day of his nativity.—When this companion of harlots opens his mouth, *before he speaks*, *the father hears.* He interrupts him, in the midst of his intended speech. The overflowings of his compassionate heart can brook no delay. He seems to be *uneasy* himself, till he has made the afflicted penitent *glad*, with the assurance of his acceptance, and the choicest of his favours.—While the poor abashed offender seeks nothing more than not to be abhorred, he is thoroughly reconciled, and honoured before the whole family. While he requests no other indulgence, than only to be treated as the *meanest servant;* he is clothed with the *best robe;* he is feasted with the *fatted calf;* he is caressed as the dear-

est

eſt of children.—Was there ever ſo bright and winning a picture of the tendereſt mercy, moſt freely vouchſafed, even to the moſt unworthy of creatures? Yet *thus*, my ſoul; and *thus*, my fellow-ſinner; will the LORD GOD of everlaſting compaſſions receive us, if, ſenſible of our miſery, and thirſting for ſalvation, we turn to him through JESUS CHRIST.

Where ſin has abounded, ſays the proclamation from the court of heaven, *grace doth much more abound.* —*Manaſſeh* was a monſter of barbarity; for he cauſed his own children to paſs through the fire, and filled *Jeruſalem* with innocent blood. *Manaſſeh* was an adept in iniquity; for he not only multiplied, and to an extravagant degree, his own ſacrilegious impieties; but he poiſoned the principles, and perverted the manners of his ſubjects, *making them to do worſe than the* moſt deteſtable of the *Heathen* idolaters *. Yet, through this ſuperabundant grace, he is humbled; he is reformed; and becomes a child of forgiving love, an heir of immortal glory.—Behold that bitter and bloody perſecutor *Saul;* when, breathing out threatenings †, and bent

* See 2 *Chron.* xxxiii.

† *Acts* ix. 1. Σαυλος ετι εμπνεων απειλης και φονου, *Saul yet breathing out threatening and ſlaughter.*—What a repreſentation is here of a mind, *mad* with *rage*, and abandoned to the fierceſt extremes of barbarity! I ſcarce know, whether I am more *ſhocked* at the perſecutor's ſavage diſpoſition, or *charmed* with the evangeliſt's lively deſcription.—The adverb ετι ſeems referable to chap. viii. ver. 3. and has, in this connection, a peculiar force. The havock he had committed, the inoffenſive families he had *already* ruined, were not ſufficient to aſſuage his vengeful ſpirit. They were only a *taſte;* which, inſtead of glutting the blood-hound, made him more cloſely purſue the track, and more eagerly pant for deſtruction.—He is *ſtill* athirſt for violence and murder. So eager and inſatiable is his thirſt, that he even *breathes out* threatening and ſlaughter. His words are ſpears and arrows, and his tongue a ſharp ſword. 'Tis as natural for him to *menace* the Chriſtians, as to breathe the air. —Nay, they *bleed* every hour, every moment, in the purpoſes

bent upon slaughter, he worried the lambs, and put to death the disciples of JESUS. Who, upon the principles of human judgment, would not have pronounced *him* a vessel of wrath, destined to unavoidable damnation? nay, would not have been ready to conclude, that, if there were heavier chains, and a deeper dungeon, in the world of wo; they must surely be reserved for such an implacable enemy of true godliness? Yet (admire and adore the inexhaustable treasures of grace!) this *Saul* is admitted into the goodly fellowship of the prophets; is numbered with the noble army of martyrs; and makes a distinguished figure among the glorious company of the apostles.—The *Corinthians* were flagitious even to a proverb. Some of them wallowed in such abominable vices, and habituated themselves to such outrageous acts of injustice, as were a reproach to human nature. Yet even these sons of violence, and slaves of sensuality, "were "washed; were sanctified; were justified *:" *washed* in the precious blood of a dying Redeemer; *sanctified* by the powerful operations of the blessed Spirit; *justified* thro' the infinitely-tender mercies of a gracious GOD. Those who were once the burden of the earth, are now the joy of heaven, and the delight of angels.

There is another instance in scripture, which most loudly publishes that sweetest of the divine names, *The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin* †. An instance this, which exceeds all the former; which exceeds whatever can be imagined; which if I was to forget, the very stones might cry out, and sound it in my ears. I mean the case of those sinners who murdered

of his rancorous heart. It is only owing to want of power, that every syllable he utters, every breath he draws, does not deal about deaths, and cause some of the innocent disciples to fall.

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. † Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

murdered the *Prince* of *Peace*, and LORD of glory.—These men could ſcarce have the ſhadow of an excuſe for their crime; hardly a circumſtance to extenuate their guilt. They were well acquainted with his exemplary converſation; they had often heard his heavenly doctrines; they were almoſt daily ſpectators of his unequalled miracles. They therefore had all poſſible reaſon to *honour* him, as the moſt illuſtrious of beings; and to *receive* his goſpel, as the moſt ineſtimable of bleſſings. Yet, notwithſtanding all theſe engaging motives to love him, even above their own lives, they ſeize his perſon; aſperſe his character; drag him before a Heathen tribunal; and extort a ſentence of death againſt innocence and holineſs itſelf. Never was the *vileſt ſlave* ſo contumeliouſly abuſed; nor the moſt *execrable malefactor* ſo barbarouſly executed. The ſun was confounded at the ſhocking ſcene; and one cannot but wonder, how the avenging lightnings could with-hold their flaſhes. The earth trembled at the horrid deed; and why, why did it not cleave aſunder, and open a paſſage, for ſuch blood-thirſty miſcreants, into the nethermoſt hell? Shall *theſe* ever hope to obtain forgiveneſs from the righteous Judge? Shall not *theſe* be conſigned over to inexorable wrath, and the ſevereſt torments?—O the miraculous effects of divine grace! O the triumphant goodneſs of GOD our Saviour! Many, even of *theſe* impious wretches, at the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, were convinced of their miſerable ſtate; were wounded with penitential remorſe: fled to the ſanctuary of the croſs; had their pardon ratified by the baptiſmal ſeal; and, continuing in the apoſtles doctrine, were made partakers of the kingdom of heaven: where they now ſhine, as ſo many everlaſting *monuments* of moſt diſtinguiſhed *mercy;* and receive beatitude paſt utterance, from that very Redeemer, whom once "with wicked hands they crucified and ſlew."

Well might the prophet cry out, with a pleaſing amazement, "Who is a GOD like unto thee, that par-

"doneth

" doneth iniquity, and passeth by transgression *!"—Let all flesh know assuredly; let all flesh rejoice greatly; that with the LORD there is *such mercy*, and with his CHRIST *such plentiful redemption*.—And O! for the voice of an archangel, to circulate the glad tidings thro' the universe; that the *American* savage, as well as the *European* sage, may learn the *exceeding riches of grace* in CHRIST: thro' whose infinitely-great propitiation, all manner of sin, barbarity, and blasphemy are freely forgiven unto men.

WHAT a grand and majestic *dome* is the sky! Where are the *pillars* which support the stately concave? What art, most exactly true, balanced the pressure? What props of insuperable strength, sustain the weight? How is that immeasurable arch *upheld*, unshaken and unimpaired; while so many generations of busy mortals have *sunk* and disappeared, as bubbles upon the stream?—If those stars are of such an amazing bulk, how are they also *fastened* in their lofty situation? By what miracle in mechanics, are so many thousands of ponderous orbs kept from falling upon our heads; kept from dashing, both the world to pieces, and its inhabitants to death? Are they hung in golden or adamantine chains? Rest they their enormous load on rocks of marble, or columns of brass?—No; they are *pendulous* in fluid æther; yet are more immoveably *fixed*, than if the everlasting mountains lent their forests for an axle-tree, or their ridges for a basis. The Almighty Architect *stretches out the north*, and its whole starry train, *over the empty place*. He *hangs the earth*, and all the ethereal globes, *upon nothing* †. Yet are their foundations laid so sure, that they can "never be moved at any time."

No unfit representation, to the *sincere* Christian, of his *final* perseverance ‡; such as points out the cause which

* Mic. vii. 18. † Job xxvi. 7.

‡ With regard to the *final perseverance* of the true believer, I am

which effects it, and constitutes the pledge which ascertains it.—His nature is all enfeebled. He is not able,

I am sensible, this point is not a little controverted.—The sentiments, which follow, are *my* stedfast belief. It is by no means proper, in a work of this nature, to enter upon a discussion of the subject: Neither have I room, so much as to hint, what might be urged for its support.—Let my reader observe, that I am far from delivering it, as essential to Christianity, or necessary to salvation. Millions, of the very contrary conviction, are, I doubt not, high in the favour of GOD, and in a growing meetness for his heavenly kingdom. As I blame none for *rejecting* *, none, I hope, will be offended with me for *espousing*, this particular doctrine.—To be of different opinions, at least in some inferior instances, seems an unavoidable consequence of our present state; where *ignorance*, in part, cleaves to the wisest minds; and *prejudice* easily besets the most impartial judgments. This may turn to our common advantage; and afford room for the display and exercise of those *healing* virtues, moderation, meekness, and forbearance.—Let me only be permitted to ask, whether this tenet does not evidently tend to establish the *comfort* of the Christian, and to magnify the *fidelity* of GOD our Saviour? whether, far from countenancing sloth, or encouraging remissness, to *know* that our labour shall not be in vain, is not the most prevailing inducement to *abound* in the work of the LORD! 1 *Cor.* xv. 58.

Is any one inclined to examine the reasons which made the author a proselyte to this persuasion? He may find them displayed in the memorial, delivered by several select and eminent divines of the church of *England*, at the renowned Synod of *Dordt*.—(See *Acta Synod. Dordrech.* par. II. pag. 246. of the *Latin* edition, published in a single quarto volume.)—Those who have no opportunity of consulting the memoirs of that venerable assembly, I would refer to the works of the indefatigable and very learned *Turrettine*, or to those of the candid and elegant *Witsius*.—Turret. tom. II. q. xvi. Witf. Oecon. lib. III. chap. xiii.

The

* As the final perseverance of the saints is as much the doctrine of the Bible, as justification by the imputed righteousness of Christ; our author's charity here seems to be culpable; and certainly those who impugn any doctrine of Christianity, are worthy of reproof.

able, of himself, to think a good thought. He has no *visible* safeguard, nor any sufficiency of his *own*. And yet whole legions of formidable enemies are in a confederacy to compass his ruin. The *world* lays unnumbered snares for his feet: the *devil* is incessantly urging the siege, by a multitude of fiery darts, or wily temptations: the *flesh*, like a perfidious inmate, under colour of friendship, and a specious pretence of pleasure, is always forward to betray his integrity.—But, amidst all these threatening circumstances, of personal weakness, and imminent danger, an invisible aid is his defence. *I will uphold thee*, says the blessed GOD, *with the right hand of my righteousness* *. Comfortable truth! The arm, which fixes the stars in their orders, and guides the planets in their course, is stretched out to preserve the heirs of salvation.—*My sheep*, adds the great Redeemer, *are mine; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand* †. What words are these! and did they come from HIM, who hath all power in heaven, and on earth! And were

The latest and fullest view of the point, which I ever remember to have met with, in any of our *English* writers, is in the *Lime-street lectures*. Which are a defence of several most important doctrines of the gospel, and contained in two octavo volumes; the united labours of *nine* modern divines; most of whom are *well* known to the world by their *other* evangelical and useful writings. In those lectures, the final perseverance of the saints is very particularly stated, and, to *my* apprehension at least, most satisfactorily proved. The arguments, usually urged against it, are impartially considered; and I cannot but think (with all due deference to the judgment of others) unanswerably confuted.

And here (not to swell this note any farther) I shall only just hint, that the judicious *Hooker* (an authority, perhaps, as weighty and unexceptionable as any that can well be produced) gives a *solemn attestation* to this tenet, in a short discourse on the perpetuity of faith, subjoined to his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, fol. edit.

* Is. xli. 10. † John x. 28.

were they ſpoke to the weakeſt of the flock, to every unfeigned follower of the great Shepherd? Then, Omnipotence itſelf muſt be *vanquiſhed*, before they can be *deſtroyed*, either by the ſeductions of fraud, or the aſſaults of violence.

If you aſk therefore, what ſecurity we have of enduring to the end, and continuing faithful unto death?—The very *ſame* that eſtabliſhes the heavens, and ſettles the ordinances of the univerſe. Can *theſe* be thrown into confuſion * ? Then may the true believer draw back unto perdition. Can the ſun be diſlodged from his ſphere, and ruſh lawleſsly thro' the ſky? Then, and then only, can the faith of GOD's elect † be *finally* overthrown.—Be of good courage then, my ſoul; rely on thoſe divine ſuccours, which are ſo ſolemnly ſtipulated, ſo faithfully promiſed. Tho' thy grace be languid as the glimmering ſpark; though the overflowings of corruption threaten it with total extinction; yet, ſince the great JEHOVAH has undertaken to cheriſh the dim principle, "many waters cannot quench it, nor all floods drown it." Nay, tho' it were feeble as the *ſmoking flax* ‡, goodneſs and faithfulneſs ſtand engaged, to augment the heat;

* Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. † Tit. i. 2.

‡ The *tenderneſs* and *faithfulneſs* of GOD to his people are finely pictured by the prophet *Iſaiah*, chap. xlii. ver. 3. Which paſſage, becauſe of its rich conſolation, and uncommon beauty, is deſervedly adopted by St *Matthew*, and ingrafted into the ſyſtem of evangelical truths.—*He will not* himſelf *break*, nor ſuffer to be broken by any other, *the bruiſed reed; nor quench the ſmoking flax*. Was it poſſible to have choſen two more delicate, and expreſſive repreſentations?—Could any image be more ſignificant of a very infirm and enfeebled *faith*, than the flexile *reed*, that bends before every wind? which, beſides its natural weakneſs, is made abundantly weaker by being *bruiſed*, and ſo is ready to fall in pieces of itſelf.—Or could any thing, with a more pathetical exactneſs, deſcribe the extreme imbecillity of that other principle of the divine life, *love*? The ſtate of the *flax*, juſt beginning to burn, is liable to be put out

heat; to raiſe the fire, and feed the flame; till it beam forth, a lamp of immortal glory, in the heavens.

As to the *faithfulneſs* of a covenanting GOD, this may be emblematically ſeen in the ſtability of the heavenly bodies, and the perpetuity of their motions *. —Thoſe that are *fixed* or *ſtationary*, continue unalterable in their grand elevations. No injurious ſhocks, no violence of conflicting elements, are able to diſplace thoſe everlaſting hinges, on which dependent worlds revolve. Through the whole flight of time, they recede not, ſo much as a hair's breadth, from the preciſe central point of their reſpective ſyſtems.—While the *erratic*, or *planetary*, perform their prodigious ſtages without any intermiſſion, or the leaſt embaraſſment. How ſoon, and how eaſily, is the moſt finiſhed piece of human machinery diſconcerted! But all the celeſtial movements are ſo nicely adjuſted, all their operations ſo critically proportioned, and their mutual dependencies ſo ſtrongly connected, that they prolong their beneficial courſes throughout all ages.—While *mighty cities* are overwhelmed in ruin, and their very names loſt in oblivion; while *vaſt empires* are ſwept from their foundations, and leave not ſo much as a ſhadowy trace of their ancient magnificence; while *all terreſtrial* things are ſubject to viciſſitude, and fluctuating in uncertainty: *theſe* are permanent in their duration; *theſe* are invariable in their functions. "Not one faileth."—Who doubts the conſtant ſucceſſion of day and night, or the regular returns

by the leaſt blaſt: more liable ſtill is the wick of the lamp, when it is not ſo much as kindled into a glimmering flame, but only *breathing ſmoke*, and uncertain whether it ſhall take fire or no.—Yet true faith, and heavenly love, though ſubſiſting amidſt ſuch pitiable infirmities, will not be abandoned by their great Author; ſhall not be extinguiſhed by any temptations; but be maintained, invigorated, and made finally triumphant. *Matth.* xii. 20.

* Pſal. cxix. 89. 90.

returns of ſummer and winter? And why, O! why ſhall we doubt the *veracity* of GOD, or diſtruſt the *accompliſhment* of his holy word? Can the ordinances of heaven depart? Then only can GOD forget to be gracious, or neglect the performance of his promiſe.—Nay, our LORD gives us yet firmer ground of affiance. He affords us a ſurer bottom for our faith, than the *fundamental laws* of the univerſe. *Heaven and earth*, he ſays, *ſhall paſs away; but my words ſhall not*, in a ſingle inſtance, or in one tittle of their import, *paſs away*. No: his ſacred word, whatever may obſtruct it, whoever may oppoſe it, ſhall be fulfilled to the very uttermoſt.

O powerful word! How aſtoniſhing is its efficacy! When this word was iſſued forth, a thouſand worlds emerged out of nothing. Should the mighty orders be repeated, a thouſand more would ſpring into exiſtence. By this word, the vaſt ſyſtem of created things is *upheld*, in conſtant and immutable perfection. Should it give command, or ceaſe to exert its energy; the univerſal frame would be diſſolved, and all nature revert to her original chaos. And this very word is *pledged* for the ſafety, the comfort, the happineſs of the godly. This inviolable, this almighty word, *ſpeaks* in all the promiſes of the goſpel.—How ſtrangely infatuated are our ſouls, that we ſhould value it ſo little? What infidels are we in fact, that we ſhould depend upon it no more? Did it *create* whatever has a being; and ſhall it not *work* faith in our breaſts? Do unnumbered worlds owe their ſupport to this word; and ſhall it not be ſufficient to buoy up our ſouls in troubles, or eſtabliſh them in trials? Is it the *life* of the univerſe, and ſhall it be a *dead* letter to mankind?

If I wiſh to be heard, when I implore heavenly bleſſings; is not *this privilege* moſt clearly made over to my enjoyment, in that well-known text, "Aſk, and "it ſhall be given you* ?"—If I long for the eternal

* Matt. vii. 7.

Comforter to dwell in my heart, and sanctify my nature; have I not an apparent title to this *high prerogative*, conferred in that sweet assertive interrogation; "How "much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy "Spirit to those that ask him * ?—If I earnestly covet the inestimable treasures that are comprised in the great IMMANUEL's mediation; can I have a firmer claim to the *noble portion*, than is granted in that most precious scripture; "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise "cast out † ?"—What assurance of being interested in these unspeakable mercies would I desire? What *form* of *conveyance*, what *deed* of *settlement*, were it left to my own option, should I chuse? Here is the word of a king; the King immortal and invisible; all whose declarations ‡ are truth itself.—If a monarch bestows immunities on a body of men, and confirm them by an authentic charter; no one controverts, no one questions their right to the royal favours. And why should we suspect the *validity* of those glorious grants, which are made by the everlasting Sovereign of nature; which he has also *ratified* by an oath, and *sealed* with the blood of his Son?—Corporations may be disfranchised, and charters revoked. Even mountains may be removed, and stars drop from their spheres: But a tenure founded on the divine promise, is unalienably *secure*, is *lasting* as eternity itself.

WE have endeavoured to spell a *syllable* of the eternal name in the ancient manuscript of the sky. We have catched a *glimpse* of the Almighty's glory, from the lustre of innumerable stars. But would we behold all his excellencies pourtrayed in *full* perfection, and drawn to the very life; let us attentively consider the REDEEMER.—I observe, there are some parts of the firmament,

* Luke xi. 13. † John vi. 37.

‡ ——— If *these* fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenness,
And earth's base built on stubble. MILT. *Comus.*

firmament, in which the ſtars ſeem, as it were, to *cluſter*. They are ſown thicker, they lye cloſer, than uſual; and ſtrike the eye with redoubled ſplendor. Like the jewels on a crown, they mingle their beams, and reflect an increaſe of brilliancy on each other.—Is there not ſuch an aſſemblage, ſuch a *conſtellation* of the divine honours, moſt amiably effulgent in the bleſſed JESUS?

Does not infinite *wiſdom* † ſhine, with ſurpaſſing brightneſs, in CHRIST? To the making of a world, there was no obſtacle; but to the ſaving of man, there ſeemed to be unſurmountable bars. If the rebel is ſuffered to eſcape; where is the *inflexible juſtice*, which denounces "death as the wages of ſin?" If the offender is thoroughly pardoned; where is the *inviolable veracity*, which has ſolemnly declared, "The "ſoul that ſinneth, ſhall die?" Theſe awful attributes are ſet in terrible array; and, like an impenetrable battalion, oppoſe the ſalvation of apoſtate mankind. Who can ſuggeſt a method to *abſolve* the traiterous race, yet vindicate the honours of almighty Sovereignty? This is an intricacy, which the moſt exalted of finite intelligencies are unable to clear.—But behold the *unſearchable ſecret* revealed! revealed in the wonderful redemption accompliſhed by a dying Saviour! ſo plainly revealed, that "he who runs "may read;" and even *babes* underſtand, what minds of the deepeſt penetration could not contrive.—The Son of GOD, taking our nature, obeys the law, and undergoes death, in our ſtead. By this means, the threatened *curſe* is executed in all its rigour, and free *grace* is exerciſed in all its riches. Juſtice maintains her rights, and, with a ſteady hand, adminiſters impartial vengeance; while mercy diſpenſes her pardons, and welcomes the repentant criminal into the tendereſt embraces. Hereby the ſeemingly thwarting attributes are reconciled. The ſinner is ſaved, not only

† See the next note.

ly in *full consistence* with the honour of the supreme perfections, but to the most *illustrious manifestation* of them all.

Where does the divine *power* * so signally exert itself, as in the cross of CHRIST, and in the conquests of grace?—Our LORD, in his lowest state of humiliation, gained a more glorious victory, than when, through the dividing sea, and the waste howling wilderness, he "rode upon his chariots and horses of "salvation." When his hands were rivetted, with irons, to the bloody tree; he disarmed death of its sting, and plucked the prey from the jaws of hell. Then, even then, while he was crucified in *weakness*, he vanquished the *strong man*, and subdued our most formidable enemies. Even then, he spoiled principalities, triumphed over the powers of darkness, and led captivity captive.—Now he is exalted to his heavenly throne, with what a prevailing efficacy does his grace go forth, "conquering, and to conquer!"—By this, the *slaves* of sin are rescued from their bondage, and restored to the *liberty* of righteousness. By this, depraved wretches, whose appetites were *sensual*, and their dispositions *devilish*, are not only renewed, but renewed after the image of GOD, and made partakers of a *divine* nature. Millions, millions of lost creatures are snatched, by the interposition of grace, like *brands* from the burning; and, translated into everlasting mansions, shine brighter than the *stars*, shine bright as the *sun*, in the kingdom of their Father.

Would you then see an incomparably more bright display of the divine excellence, than the unspotted firmament, the spangles of heaven, or the golden fountain

* CHRIST, *the wisdom of GOD, and the power of GOD.* 1 Cor. i. 24.—*To the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church* (by the amazing contrivance, and accomplishment of its redemption) *the* deep, extensive, and (πολυποικιλος) *greatly-diversified wisdom of GOD.* Eph. iii. 10.

fountain of day exhibit? Contemplate JESUS of *Nazareth*. He is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. In his immaculate nature, in his heavenly tempers, in his moſt holy life, the *moral perfections* of the Deity are repreſented to the higheſt advantage *.—Hark! how *Mercy*, with her charming voice, ſpeaks in all he utters. See! how *Benevolence* pours her choiceſt ſtores, in all he does. Did ever compaſſion look ſo amiably ſoft, as in thoſe pitying tears, which ſwelled his eyes, and trickled down his cheeks, to bedew the rancour of his inveterate enemies?—Was it poſſible for *Patience* to aſſume a form ſo lovely, as that ſweetly-winning conduct, which bore the contradiction of ſinners? which intreated the obſtinate to be reconciled, beſought the guilty not to die?—In other things, we may find ſome *ſcattered* rays of JEHOVAH'S glory; but in CHRIST they are all collected and united. In CHRIST they beam forth, with the ſtrongeſt radiance, with the moſt delightful effulgence. *Out of Sion*, and in *Sion*'s great Redeemer, *hath GOD appeared in perfect beauty*.

Search then, my ſoul, above all other purſuits, ſearch the records of redeeming love. Let theſe be the principal objects of thy ſtudy. Here employ thyſelf with the moſt unwearied aſſiduity.—*In theſe are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge* †. *Such wiſdom*, as

* In this ſenſe, that ſaying of our LORD is eminently true, *He that hath ſeen ME, hath ſeen the FATHER.* John xiv. 9.

† *Coloſſ.* ii. 3.—Not a mean degree, but a *treaſure*; not one treaſure, but *many*; not many only, but *all* treaſures, of true wiſdom, and ſaving knowledge, are in CHRIST, and his glorious goſpel.—The tranſcendent *excellency* of thoſe treaſures ſeems to be finely intimated in that other expreſſion αποκρυφοι, *hid*; (which may be interpreted by the *Hebrew* טמונים, *Job* iii. 21.) *laid up*, with the utmoſt care, and the greateſt ſafety. Not left at all adventures, to be ſtumbled upon by every giddy wanderer; or to fall into the arms of the yawning ſluggard; but, like jewels of the brighteſt luſtre, or riches of the higheſt value, *kept in ſtore* to adorn and reward the diligent ſearcher.

as charms and astonishes the very angels; engages their closest attention, and fills them with the deepest adoration *. *Such knowledge*, as qualifies the possessor, if not for offices of dignity on earth, yet for the most honourable advancements in the kingdom of heaven. Disunited from which knowledge, all application is but elaborate impertinence; and all science, no better than pompous ignorance.—These records contain the faultless model of duty, and the noblest motives to obedience. Nothing so powerful to work a lively faith, and a joyful hope, as an attentive consideration of our LORD's unutterable merits. Nothing so sovereign to antidote the pestilential influence of the world, and deliver our affections from a slavery to ignoble objects, as an habitual remembrance of his extreme agonies. The genuine, the ever-fruitful *source* of all *morality*, is the unfeigned love of CHRIST; and the cross, the CROSS, is the appointed † *altar*, from which we may fetch a coal ‡, to enkindle this sacred fire.

Behold,

* This, I believe, is the *import* of the apostle's language, though it is not a *literal* translation of εἰς ἃ ἐπιθυμοῦσιν ἄγγελοι παρακύψαι, 1 *Pet.* i. 12.—I never had such a lively apprehension of the beautiful significancy of the last word, as when I have attended a dissection of some part of the animal body. In order to discern the *minutiæ* of the admirable frame, the latent wonders of art and mechanism, the eye is so sharpened, and its application so *intensely bended*, as gives a very just *experimental* comment on that expressive phrase, παρακύψαι.—With such earnest attention is the everlasting gospel contemplated by the *angelic* orders! How much more, if it were possible, does it deserve the devout and incessant consideration of *human* minds? since, by *them*, it is not only to be speculated, as a bright and ravishing display of the divine attributes; but to be applied to their fallen nature, as a most benign scheme of *recovering* grace; as the sure and only method of obtaining life and immortality.

† *And I*, says our LORD, *if I be lifted up from the earth*, and extended on the cross, *will draw all men unto me*; will give such a rich and transcendent display of *my* love, as shall constitute the most powerful and prevailing attractive of *theirs*. *John* xii. 32.

‡ Alluding to *Is.* vi. 6.

Behold, therefore, *the man*; the matchleſs and ſtupendous man; whoſe practice was a pattern of the moſt exalted virtue, and his perſon the mirror of every divine perfection. Examine the memoirs of his heavenly temper, and exemplary converſation. Contemplate that *choir* of *graces*, which were aſſociated in his mind, and ſhed the higheſt luſtre on all his actions. Familiarize to thy thoughts his inſtructive diſcourſes, and enter into the very ſpirit of his refined doctrines: that the graces may be transfuſed into thy breaſt, and the doctrines tranſcribed in thy life.—Follow him to *Calvary*'s horrid eminence; to *Calvary*'s fatal cataſtrophe: where innocence, dignity, and merit, were *made perfect thro' ſufferings*; each ſhining, with all poſſible ſplendor, thro' the tragical ſcene; ſomewhat like his own radiant bow, then glowing with the greateſt beauty, when appearing on the darkeſt cloud.—Be thy moſt conſtant attention fixed on that lovely and ſorrowful ſpectacle. Behold the ſpotleſs victim nailed to the tree, and ſtabbed to the heart. Hear him pouring out prayers for his murderers, before he poured out his ſoul for tranſgreſſors. See the wounds that ſtream with forgiveneſs, and *bleed balm* for a diſtempered world. O! ſee the juſtice of the Almighty and his goodneſs; his mercy and his vengeance; every *tremendous* and *gracious* attribute manifeſted, manifeſted with inexpreſſible glory, in that moſt *ignominious*, yet *grandeſt*, of tranſactions.

SINCE GOD is ſo inconceivably great, as theſe his marvellous works declare;

Since the great Sovereign ſends ten thouſand worlds,
To tell us, he reſides above them all,
In glory's unapproachable receſs *; how

* For this *quotation*, and ſeveral valuable *hints*, I acknowledge myſelf indebted to thoſe beautiful and ſublime poems, entitled, *Night-Thoughts*.—Of which I ſhall only ſay, that I receive freſh pleaſure, and richer improvement, from every

how can we forbear haſtening, with *Moſes*, bowing ourſelves to the earth, and worſhipping? O! what an honourable, as well as advantageous employ, is prayer!—*Advantageous*. By prayer, we cultivate that improving correſpondence with JEHOVAH, we carry on that gladdening intercourſe with his SPIRIT, which muſt begin here, in order to be completed in eternity.—*Honourable*. By prayer, we have acceſs to that mighty potentate, whoſe ſceptre ſways univerſal nature, and whoſe rich regalia fill the ſkies with luſtre. Prayer places us in his preſence-chamber; while "the blood of ſprinkling," procures us a gracious audience.

Shall I then *bluſh* to be found proſtrate before the throne of grace? Shall I be *aſhamed* to have it known that I offer up ſocial ſupplications in the family, or am conſcientious in obſerving my private retirements? Rather, let me glory in this unſpeakable privilege. Let me reckon it the *nobleſt* poſture, to fall low on my knees before his footſtool; and the *higheſt* honour, to enjoy communion with his moſt exalted Majeſty.—Incomparably more noble, than to ſit, in perſon, on the triumphal chariot; or to ſtand, in effigy, amidſt the temple of worthies.

Moſt ineſtimable, in ſuch a view, is that promiſe, which ſo often occurs in the prophetic writings, and is the crowning benefit of the new covenant, *I will be thy God**.—Will this ſupremely excellent and almighty Being

renewed peruſal. And, I think, I ſhall have reaſon to bleſs the indulgent Beſtower of all wiſdom, for thoſe inſtructive and animating compoſitions, even in my laſt moments. Than which nothing can more emphatically ſpeak their *ſuperior excellence*, nor give a more ſolid ſatisfaction to their worthy author.—Happy ſhould I think myſelf, if theſe little ſketches of contemplative devotion might be honoured with the *moſt inferior* degree of the ſame ſucceſs; might receive a teſtimony, not from the voice of fame, but from the dying lips of ſome edified Chriſtian.

* Heb. viii. 10.

Being vouchsafe to be *my* portion? to settle upon a poor sinner, not the heritage of a country, not the possession of the whole earth, but his *own* ever-blessed *self*? May I then, thro' his free condescending grace, and the unknown merits of his Son, look upon all these infinitely-noble attributes as my treasure? May I regard the *wisdom*, which superintends such a multitude of worlds, as my guide; the *power*, which produced, and preserves them in existence, as my guard; the *goodness*, which, by an endless communication of favours, renders them all so many habitations of happiness, as *my exceeding great reward*?—What a fund of felicity is included in such a blessing! How often does the *Israelitish* prince exult in the assurance, that this unutterable and boundless good is his own? Interested in this, he bids defiance to every evil that can be dreaded, and rests in certain expectation of every blessing that can be desired. The *LORD is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? The LORD*, with an air of exultation, he repeats both his affiance, and his challenge, *is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid* *? Nothing so effectual, as this appropriating faith, to inspire a dignity of mind, superior to transitory trifles; or to create a calmness of temper, unalarmed by vulgar fears, unappalled by death itself.—*The LORD is my shepherd*, says the same truly gallant and heroic personage: *therefore shall I lack nothing* †. How is it possible, he should suffer want, who has the all-sufficient fulness for his supply? So long as unerring wisdom is capable of contriving the means, so long as uncontrollable power is able to execute them; such a one cannot fail of being safe and happy, whether he continue amidst the vicissitudes of time, or depart into the unchangeable eternity.

Here, let us stand a moment, and humbly contemplate this great GOD, together with ourselves, in a re-

* Psal. xxvii. 1. † Psal. xxiii. 1.

lative view.—If we reflect on the works of *material* nature, their number incomprehensible, and their extent unmeasurable; each of them apart, so admirably framed; the connections of the whole so exquisitely regulated; and all derived from one and the same glorious Agent:—If we recollect the far more noble accomplishments of elegant taste, and discerning judgment; of refined affections, and exalted sentiments; which are to be found among the several orders of *intelligent* existence; and all of them flowing, in rich emanations, from the one sole fountain of intellectual light:—If we farther consider this Author of material beauty, and moral excellency, as a *Guardian*, a *Governor*, and *Benefactor* to all his creatures; supporting the whole system, and protecting each individual, by an ever-watchful providence; presiding over the minutest affairs, and causing all events to terminate in the most extensive good; heaping, with unremitted liberality, his benefits upon every capable object, and making the circuit of the universe a seminary of happiness:—Is it possible for the human heart, under such captivating views, to be *indifferent* towards this most benign, most bountiful Original of being and of bliss? Can any be so immersed in stupidity, as to say unto the Almighty,—in the language of an irreligious temper, and licentious life, to say, "Depart from us; we implore not "thy favour; nor desire the knowledge of thy ways."—Wonder, O *heavens!* be amazed, O *earth!* and let the inhabitants of *both* express their astonishment, at this unparalleled complication of disingenuous, ungrateful, destructive perverseness!

If we consider our *fallen* and *imperfect* state; frail in our bodies: enfeebled in our minds; in every part of our constitution, and in all the occurrences of life, "like a tottering wall, or a broken hedge;"—If we survey our *indigent* and *infirm* state, without holiness, without spiritual strength; our possession of present conveniencies entirely dependent on GOD's sovereign pleasure;

yea,

yea, forfeited, juſtly forfeited, with every future hope, by a thouſand aggravated iniquities :—If we add the various *diſaſters* of our condition ; agitated as we are by tumultuous paſſions ; oppreſſed with diſpiriting fears ; held in ſuſpenſe by a variety of perplexing * cares ; liable to pains, and expoſed to troubles ; troubles from every quarter ; troubles of every kind :—Can we, amidſt ſo many wants, under ſuch deplorable infirmities, and ſubject to ſuch diſaſtrous accidents,—can we be unconcerned, whether GOD's omnipotent, irreſiſtible, all-conducting hand be *againſt* us, or *for* us ? Imagination itſelf ſhudders at the thought !—Can we reſt ſatisfied, without a well-grounded perſuaſion, that we are *reconciled* to this ſupreme LORD, and the objects of his unchangeable goodneſs ?—If there be an abandoned wretch, whoſe apprehenſions are ſo fatally blinded ; who is ſo utterly loſt to all ſenſe of his duty, and of his intereſt ; let me bewail his *miſery*, while I abhor his impiety ; bewail his miſery ; though Popularity, with her choiceſt laurels, adorn his brow ; though Affluence, with her richeſt delicacies, load his table ;

* *Perplexing*.—Thoſe who read the original language of the New Teſtament, are ſufficiently appriſed, that ſuch is the *ſignificancy* of that benevolent diſſuaſive urged by our LORD, μη μεριμνατε, *Matth* vi 25.—I beg leave, for the ſake of the *unlearned* reader, to obſerve, that our tranſlation, though for the moſt part faithful and excellent, has here miſrepreſented our divine Maſter's meaning. *Take no thought* for your food, for your raiment, for your bodily welfare, is not only not the true ſenſe, but the very reverſe of this ſcriptural doctrine. We are required to take a *prudent* and *moderate* thought for the neceſſaries of life. The ſluggard who neglects this decent precaution, is ſeverely reprimanded ; is ſent to one of the meaneſt animals, to bluſh for his folly, and learn diſcretion from her conduct, *Prov.* vi. 6. Our Saviour's precept, and the exact ſenſe of his expreſſion, is, Take no *anxious* thought ; indulge no *perplexing* care ; no ſuch care, as may argue an unreaſonable *diſtruſt* of providence, or may *rend* and *tear* your minds with diſtreſſing, with pernicious ſolicitude.

table; though half a nation, or half a world, conspire to call him *happy*.

May I, by a believing application, solace myself in this everlasting source of love, perfection, and joy! Grant me this request, and I ask no more.—Only, that I may expect, not with a reluctant anxiety, but with a ready chearfulness, the arrival of that important hour, when this veil of flesh shall drop, and the shadows of mortality flee away; when I shall no longer complain of *obscure* knowledge, *languid* affections, and *imperfect* fruition;—but shall see the uncreated and immortal Majesty; *see* him, not in this distant and unaffecting method of reasoning from his works; but with the most clear and direct intuition of the mind:—when I shall *love* him, not with a cold and contracted spirit; but with the most lively and enlarged emotions of gratitude:—when I shall incessantly *enjoy* the light of his countenance; and be united, inseparably united to his all-glorious GODHEAD.—Take, ye ambitious, unenvied and unopposed, take to yourselves the toys of state. May I be enabled to *rejoice* in this blessed hope; and to *triumph* in that amiable, that adorable, that delightful name, the LORD MY GOD! And I shall scarce bestow a thought on the splendid pageantry of the world, unless it be to *despise* its empty pomp, and to *pity* its deluded admirers.

ALL these bodies, though immense in their size, and almost infinite in their multitude, are *obedient* to the divine command. The GOD of wisdom "tell-"eth their numbers," and is intimately acquainted with their various properties. The GOD of power "calleth them all by their names," and assigns them whatsoever office he pleases. He *marshals* all the starry legions, with infinitely greater ease, and nicer order, than the most expert general arranges his disciplined troops. He appoints their *posts;* he marks their *route;* he fixes the time for their *return*. The

posts

poſts which he appoints, they occupy without fail. In the route which he ſettles, they perſevere, without the leaſt deviation. And to the inſtant * which he fixes for their return, they are preciſely punctual.—He has given them a *law*, which, through a long revolution of ages, ſhall not be broken, unleſs his ſovereign will interpoſes for its *repeal*. Then, indeed, the motion of the celeſtial orbs is controlled; their action remains ſuſpended; or their influence receives a new direction. —The *ſun*, at his creation, iſſued forth with a command, to travel perpetually through the heavens. Since which, he has never neglected to perform the great circuit; "rejoicing as a giant to run his race." But, when it is requiſite to accompliſh the purpoſes of divine love, the orders are countermanded; the flaming courier remits his career; *ſtands ſtill in Gibeon* †; and, for the conveniency of the choſen people, holds back the falling day.—The *moon* was diſpatched with a charge, never to intermit her revolving courſe, till day and night come to an end. But when the children of providence are to be favoured with an uncommon continuance of light, ſhe halts in her march, makes a ſolemn pauſe *in the valley of Ajalon* ‡, and delays to bring on her attendant train

* "The planets, and all the innumerable hoſt of heavenly "bodies, perform their courſes and revolutions, with ſo much "certainty and exactneſs, as never once to fail; but, for al- "moſt 6000 years, come conſtantly about to the ſame period, "in the hundredth part of a minute." STACKHOUSE's *Hiſt. Bible.*

† This is ſpoken in conformity to the ſcripture-language, and according to the common notion. With reſpect to the power which effected the alteration, it is much the ſame thing, and alike miraculous, whether the ſun, or the earth, be ſuppoſed to move.

‡ *Joſh.* x. 12, 13.—The prophet *Habakkuk*, according to his lofty manner, celebrates this event; and points out, in very poetical diction, the deſign of ſo ſurpriſing a miracle.—*The ſun and moon ſtood ſtill in their habitation: in the light*, the long-

train of shadows.—When the enemies of the LORD are to be discomfited, the *stars* are levied into the service; the stars are armed, and take the field; *the stars, in their courses fought against Sisera* *.

So dutiful is material nature! so obsequious, in *all* her *forms*, to her Creator's pleasure!—The bellowing thunders listen to his voice; and the volleyed lightnings observe the direction of his eye. The flying storm, and impetuous whirlwind, wear his yoke. The raging waves revere his nod; they shake the earth; they dash the skies; yet never offer to pass the limits which he has prescribed.—Even the planetary spheres, though vastly *larger* than this wide-extended earth, are in his hand, as *clay* in the hands of the potter. Though, *swifter* than the northern blast, they sweep the long tracts of æther; yet are they guided by his reins, and execute whatever he enjoins.—

All

long-continued and miraculous light, *thy arrows*, edged with destruction, *walked* on their awful errand; *in the clear shining* of the day, protracted for this very purpose, *thy glittering spear*, launched by thy people, but guided by thy hand, sprung to its prey. *Hab.* iii. 11.

* *Judg.* v. 20.—The scriptural phrase *fought against*, will, I hope, be a proper *warrant* for every expression I have used on this occasion.—The passage is generally supposed to signify, that some very dreadful *meteors*, (which the stars were thought to influence,) such as fierce flashes of *lightning*, impetuous showers of *rain*, and rapid storms of *hail*, were employed by the Almighty to terrify, annoy, and overthrow the enemies of *Israel*. If so, there cannot be a more clear and lively paraphrase on the text, than those fine lines of a *Jewish* writer. —*His severe wrath shall HE sharpen for a sword; and* the world *shall* fight *with him* against *the ungodly. Then shall the* right-aiming thunderbolts *go abroad; and from the* clouds, *as from a* well-drawn bow, *shall they fly to the mark. And* hail-stones, *full of wrath, shall be cast out of a stone-bow; and the* water *of the sea shall rage against them; and the* floods (as was the case of the river *Kishon*) *shall cruelly drown them; yea, a mighty wind shall stand up against them; and, like a* storm, *shall blow them away.* Wisd. v. 20, 21, 22, 23.

All thoſe enormous globes of *central* fire, which beam through the boundleſs azure, in compariſon of which an army of planets were like a ſwarm of ſummer-inſects; thoſe, even thoſe, are conformable to his will, as the *melting wax* to the impreſſed ſeal.—Since *all*, ALL is obedient, throughout the whole aſcent of things, ſhall man be the *only rebel* againſt the almighty Maker? Shall theſe unruly *appetites* reject his government, and refuſe their allegiance? Shall theſe headſtrong *paſſions* break looſe from divine reſtraint, and run wild, in exorbitant ſallies, after their own imaginations?

O my ſoul, be ſtung with remorſe, and overwhelmed with confuſion, at the thought! Is it not a righteous thing, that the bleſſed GOD ſhould ſway the ſceptre, with the moſt abſolute authority, over all the creatures which his power has formed? eſpecially over thoſe creatures, whom his diſtinguiſhing favour has endued with the noble principle of reaſon, and made capable of a bliſsful immortality? Sure, if all the ranks of inanimate exiſtence conform to their Maker's decree, by the *neceſſity* of their nature; this more excellent race of beings ſhould pay their equal homage, by the *willing* compliance of their affections *.—

Come

* This argument, I acknowledge, is not abſolutely concluſive. But it is popular and ſtriking. Nor can I think myſelf obliged in ſuch a work, where *fancy* bears a conſiderable ſway, to proceed always with the caution and exactneſs of a *diſputer* in the *ſchools*. If there be ſome appearance of analogy between the fact and the inference, it ſeems ſufficient for my purpoſe; though the deduction ſhould not be neceſſary, nor the proceſs ſtrictly ſyllogiſtical.—One of the *apoſtolic fathers* has an affecting and ſublime paragraph, which runs entirely in this form: Ηλιος τε και σεληνη αστερων τε χοροι, καλα την διαταξην αυτων εν ομονοια, δικα παυσης παρεκβασιος, εξελισσουσιν τυς επιτεταγμενυς αυτοις ορισμυς. *The ſun, the moon, and the ſtarry choir, without the leaſt deviation, and with the utmoſt harmony, perform the revolutions appointed them by the ſupreme decree.* From which remark, a vaſt abundance of other

Come then, all ye *faculties* of my *mind;* come, all ye *powers* of my *body;* give up yourſelves, without a moment's delay, without the leaſt reſerve, to his government. Stand, like dutiful ſervants, at his foot-ſtool; in an everlaſting readineſs to *do* whatſoever he requires; to *be* whatſoever he appoints; to further, with united efforts, the purpoſes of his glory in this earthly ſcene; or elſe to ſeparate, without reluctance, at his ſummons; the *one*, to ſleep in the ſilent duſt; the *other*, to advance his honour, in ſome remoter colony of his kingdom.—Thus may I join with all the works of the LORD, in all places of his dominion, to recognize his univerſal ſupremacy; and proclaim him Sovereign of ſouls, as well as Ruler of worlds.

AT my firſt coming abroad, all theſe luminaries were *eclipſed*, by the overpowering luſtre of the ſun. They were all placed in the very ſame ſtations, and played the ſame ſprightly beams; yet not one of them was ſeen. As the day light wore away, and the ſober ſhades advanced; *Heſperus*, who leads the ſtarry train, diſcloſed his radiant forehead, and catched my eye. While I ſtood gazing on his bright and beautiful aſpect, ſeveral of his attendants peeped through the blue curtains. Scarce had I turned to obſerve theſe freſh emanations of ſplendor, but others dropt the veil, others ſtole into view. When lo! faſter and more numerous, multitudes ſprung from obſcurity; they poured, in ſhining troops, and in ſweet confuſion, over all the empyrean plain; till the firmament ſeemed

ſimilar inſtances, obſervable in the œconomy of nature; he exhorts Chriſtians to a cordial *unanimity* among themſelves, and a dutiful *obedience* to GOD. Vid. *Clem. Roman.* 1 *ep. ad Corinth. ſect.* 20.—See alſo a beautiful ode in Dr *Watt*'s Lyric Poems, entitled, *The Compariſon and Complaint*, which turns upon this very thought.

ed like one vaſt conſtellation; and "a flood of glo-"ry burſt from all the ſkies."

Is not ſuch the *riſe*, and ſuch the *progreſs* of a true *converſion*, in the prejudiſed infidel, or inattentive ſinner? During the period of his vainer years, a thouſand intereſting truths lay utterly undiſcovered; a thouſand momentous concerns were entirely diſregarded. But, when divine grace diſſipates the deluſive glitter, which dazzled his underſtanding, and beguiled his affections; then he begins to diſcern, dimly to diſcern, the things which belong unto his peace. Some admonition of ſcripture darts conviction into his ſoul, as the glimmering of a ſtar pierces the gloom of night. —Then, perhaps, another awful, or chearing text, impreſſes terror, or diffuſes comfort. A *threatening* alarms his fears, or a *promiſe* awakens his hopes. This, poſſibly, is ſucceeded by ſome *afflictive* diſpenſation of providence; and improved by ſome edifying and inſtructive converſation. All which is eſtabliſhed as to its continuance, and enlarged as to its influence, by a diligent ſtudy of the ſacred word.—By this means, new truths continually pour their evidence. Scenes of refined and exalted, but hitherto unknown delight, addreſs him with their attractives. New deſires take wing; new purſuits are ſet on foot. A new turn of mind forms his temper; a new habit of converſation regulates his life. In a word, *old things are paſſed away, and all things become new.* He who was ſometime darkneſs, is now light, and life, and joy in the LORD.

THE more attentively I view the cryſtal concave, the more fully I diſcern the richneſs of its decorations. Abundance of minuter lights, which lay concealed from a *ſuperficial* notice, are viſible on a *cloſer* examination. Eſpecially in thoſe tracts of the ſky, which are called the *galaxy;* and are diſtinguiſhable by a ſort of milky path. There the ſtars are crouded, rather than diſſeminated. The region ſeems to be all on a blaze,

with their ſplendid rays.—Beſides this vaſt profuſion, which in my preſent ſituation the eye diſcovers; was I to make my ſurvey, from any other part of the globe, lying nearer the ſouthern pole, I ſhould behold a *new choir* of ſtarry bodies, which have never appeared within our horizon.—Was I (which is ſtill more wonderful,) either here or there, to view the firmament with the virtuoſo's glaſs; I ſhould find a prodigious multitude of flaming orbs, which, immerſed in depths of æther, eſcape the keeneſt unaſſiſted ſight *. —Yet, in theſe various ſituations, even with the aid of the teleſcope tube, I ſhould not be able to deſcry the half, perhaps not a *thouſandth* part, of thoſe majeſtic luminaries, which the vaſt expanſive heavens contain †. —So, the more diligently I purſue my ſearch into thoſe oracles of eternal truth, the *ſcriptures*; I perceive a wider, a deeper, an ever-increaſing fund of ſpiritual treaſures. I perceive the brighter ſtrokes of wiſdom, and the richer diſplays of goodneſs; a more tranſcendent excellency in the illuſtrious Meſſiah, and a more deplorable vileneſs in fallen man; a more immaculate purity in GOD's law, and more precious privileges in his goſpel. Yet, after a courſe of ſtudy, ever ſo aſſiduous, ever ſo prolonged, I ſhould have reaſon to own myſelf a mere *babe* in heavenly knowledge; or, at moſt, but a *puerile* proficient in the ſchool of CHRIST.

AFTER

* Come forth, O man, yon azure round ſurvey,
And view thoſe lamps, which yield eternal day.
Bring forth thy glaſſes: clear thy wond'ring eyes:
Millions beyond the former millions riſe:
Look farther;—millions more blaze from remoter ſkies.
See an ingenious poem, entitled, The Univerſe.

† How noble, conſidered in this view, are the celebrations of the Divine Majeſty, which frequently occur in the ſacred writings! *It is the LORD that made the heavens.* Pſal. xcvi. 5.—What a prodigious dignity does ſuch a ſenſe of things give to that devout aſcription of praiſe! *Thou, even thou, art LORD alone; thou haſt made heaven, the heaven of heavens with*

AFTER all my moſt accurate inſpection, thoſe ſtarry orbs appear but as *glittering points*. Even the planets, though ſo much nearer our earthly manſion, ſeem only like burning *bullets*. If then we have ſuch *imperfect apprehenſions* of viſible and material things; how much more ſcanty and inadequate muſt be our notions of inviſible and immortal objects!—We behold the ſtars. Though every one is incomparably bigger than the globe we inhabit, yet they dwindle, upon our ſurvey, into the moſt diminutive forms. Thus, we ſee by faith the glories of the bleſſed JESUS; the atoning efficacy of his death; the juſtifying merit of his righteouſneſs; and the joys which are reſerved for his followers. But, alas! even our moſt *exalted* ideas are vaſtly *below* the truth; as much below the truth, as the report which our eyes make of thoſe celeſtial edifices, is inferior to their real grandeur.—Should we take in all the *magnifying* aſſiſtances which art has contrived; thoſe luminous bodies would elude our ſkill, and appear as *ſmall* as ever. Should an inhabitant of earth travel towards the cope of heaven; and be carried forwads, in his aerial journey, more than a hundred and ſixty millions of miles *; even in that advanced ſituation, thoſe *oceans* of *flame* would look no larger than *radiant ſpecks*.—In like manner, conceive ever ſo magnificently of the Redeemer's honours, and of

with all their hoſt. Nehem. ix. 6.—Examined by this rule, the beautiful climax in our inſpired hymn is ſublime beyond compare. *Praiſe HIM, ſun and moon: praiſe HIM, all ye ſtars of light: praiſe HIM ye heavens of heavens.* Pſal. cxlviii. 3. 4.

* This, incredible as it may ſeem, is not a mere ſuppoſition, but a real fact. For, about the twenty-firſt of *December*, we are above 160,000,000 of miles nearer the northern parts of the ſky, than we were at the twenty-firſt of *June*: And yet, with regard to the ſtars ſituate in that quarter, we perceive no *change* in their *aſpect*, nor any *augmentation* of their *magnitude*.

of the bliſs which he has purchaſed for his people; yet you will fall ſhort. Raiſe your imagination *higher*; ſtretch your invention *wider*; give them *all* the ſcope which a ſoaring and excurſive fancy can take; ſtill your conceptions will be extremely *diſproportionate* to their genuine perfections. Vaſt are the bodies which roll in the expanſe of heaven; vaſter far are thoſe fields of æther, through which they run their endleſs round: but the excellency of JESUS, and the happineſs laid up for his ſervants, are greater than *either*, than *both*, than *all*. An inſpired writer calls the former, "the unſearchable riches of CHRIST;" and ſtyles the latter, "an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory."

IF thoſe ſtars are ſo many inexhauſtible magazines of fire, and immenſe *reſervoirs* of light; there is no reaſon to doubt, but they have ſome very *grand uſes*, ſuitable to the magnificence of their nature. To ſpecify or explain the particular purpoſes they anſwer, is altogether impoſſible, in our preſent ſtate of diſtance and ignorance. This, however, we may clearly diſcern; they are diſpoſed in that very manner which is moſt *pleaſing* and moſt *ſerviceable* to mankind.—They are not placed at an *infinite remove*, ſo as to lye beyond our ſight; neither are they brought *ſo near* our abode, as to annoy us with their beams. We ſee them ſhine on every ſide. The deep azure, which ſerves them as a ground, heightens their ſplendor. At the ſame time, their influence is gentle, and their rays are deſtitute of heat. So that we are ſurrounded with a multitude of fiery globes, which beautify and illuminate the firmament, without any riſk either to the *coolneſs* of our night, or the *quiet* of our repoſe.—Who can ſufficently admire that wondrous benignity, which, on our account, ſtrews the *earth* with bleſſings of every kind, and vouchſafes to make the *very heavens* ſubſervient to our delight?

It is not ſolely to adorn the roof of our palace with coſtly

coſtly gildings, that GOD commands the celeſtial luminaries to glitter through the gloom. We alſo reap conſiderable benefits from their miniſtry.—They *divide* our *time*, and fix its ſolemn periods. They ſettle the *order* of our *works;* and are, according to the deſtination mentioned in ſacred writ, "for ſigns, and for "ſeaſons; for days, and for years." The returns of heat and cold alone, would have been too precarious a rule. But theſe radiant bodies, by the *variation*, and alſo by the *regularity*, of their motions, afford a method of calculating, abſolutely certain, and ſufficiently obvious. By this, the *farmer* is inſtructed when to commit his grain to the furrows, and how to conduct the operations of huſbandry.—By this, the *ſailor* knows when to proceed on his voyage with leaſt peril, and how to carry on the buſineſs of navigation with moſt ſucceſs.

Why ſhould not the Chriſtian, the probationer for eternity, learn from the ſame monitors, to *number*—for nobler purpoſes, to number his *days;* and duly to tranſact the grand, grand affairs of his everlaſting ſalvation? Since GOD has appointed ſo many bright meaſurers of our time, to determine its larger periods, and to minute down its ordinary ſtages; ſure this moſt ſtrongly inculcates its *value*, and ſhould powerfully prompt us to *improve* it.—Behold! the ſupreme LORD marks the progreſs of our life, in that moſt conſpicuous kalendar above. Does not ſuch an ordination tell us, and in the moſt emphatical language, that our life is given for *uſe*, not for *waſte?* that no portion of it is delivered, but under a ſtrict account; that all of it is entered, as it paſſes, in the divine regiſter; and, therefore, that the ſtewards of ſuch a talent are to expect a future reckoning? Behold! the very heavens are bidden to be the *accountants* of our years, and months, and days. O! may this induce us to manage them with a vigilant frugality; to part with them, as miſers with their *hoarded treaſure*, warily and circumſpectly;

ſpectly; and, if poſſible, as merchants with their *rich commodities*, not without an equivalent, either in perſonal improvement, or ſocial uſefulneſs!

How *bright* the ſtarry diamonds ſhine! The ambition of eaſtern monarchs could imagine no diſtinction more noble and ſublime, than that of being likened to thoſe beaming orbs *. They form night's *richeſt dreſs*; and ſparkle upon her ſable robe, like jewels of the fineſt luſtre. Like jewels! I wrong their character. The lucid ſtone has no brilliancy; quenched is the flame even of the golden topaz; compared with thoſe glowing decorations of heaven. How widely are their radiant honours *diffuſed!* No nation ſo remote, but ſees their beauty, and rejoices in their uſefulneſs. They have been admired by all preceding generations; and every riſing age will gaze on their charms, with renewed delight.—How *animating*, then, is that promiſe made to the faithful miniſters of the goſpel! "They that turn many to righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as "the ſtars for ever and ever †." Is not this a moſt winning encouragement, "to ſpend and be ſpent" in the ſervice of ſouls? Methinks, the ſtars beckon, as they twinkle. Methinks they ſhew me their ſplendors, on purpoſe to inſpire me with *alacrity* in the race ſet before me; on purpoſe to enliven my *activity* in the work that is given me to do.—Yes; ye majeſtic monitors, I underſtand your meaning. If honour has any charms; if true glory, the glory which cometh from GOD, is any attractive; you diſplay the moſt powerful incitements to exerciſe all aſſiduity in my holy vocation. I will, henceforth, obſerve your intimation; and, when zeal becomes *languid*, have recourſe to your heavenly lamps; if ſo be I may *rekindle* its ardor at thoſe inextinguiſhable fires.

OF the *polar* ſtar, it is obſervable, that, while other luminaries

* Numb. xxiv. 17. Dan. viii. 10. † Dan. xii. 3.

luminaries *alter* their situation, this seems invariably *fixed* *. While other luminaries, now, mount the battlements of heaven, and appear upon duty; now retire beneath the horizon, and resign to a fresh set the watches of the night; this never departs from its station. This, in every season, maintains an uniform position; and is always to be found in the same tract of the northern sky.—How often has this beamed bright intelligence on the *sailor;* and conducted the keel to its desired haven! In early ages, those who went down to the sea in ships, and occupied their business in great waters, had scarce any other sure guide for their wandering vessel. This therefore they viewed with the most solicitous attention. By this they formed their observations, and regulated their voyage. When this was obscured by clouds, or enveloped in mists, the trembling mariner was *bewildered* on the watery waste. His thoughts fluctuated, as much as the floating surge; and he knew not *where* he was advanced, or *whither* he should steer. But, when this auspicious star broke through the gloom, it dissipated the anxiety of his mind, and cleared up his dubious passage. He re-assumed, with alacrity, the management of the helm; and was able to shape his course, with some tolerable degree of satisfaction and certainty.

Such, only much clearer in its light, and much surer in its direction, is the *holy word* of GOD, to those myriads of intellectual beings, who are bound for the eternal shores; who, embarked in a vessel of feeble flesh, are to pass the waves of this tempestuous and perilous world. In all *difficulties*, those sacred pages shed an encouraging ray; in all *uncertainties*, they suggest

* I speak in conformity to the *appearance* of the object. For though this remarkable star revolves round the pole, its motion is so *slow*, and the circle it describes, so *small*, as render both the revolution and change of situation hardly perceivable.

geſt the right determination, and point out the proper procedure. What is ſtill a more ineſtimable advantage, they, like the ſtar which conducted the eaſtern ſages, make plain the way of acceſs to a *Redeemer*. They diſplay his unſpeakable merits; they diſcover the method of being intereſted in his great atonement; and lead the weary ſoul, *toſſed* by troubles, and *ſhattered* by temptations, to that only harbour of peaceful repoſe.—Let us, therefore, attend to this *unerring* directory, with the ſame conſtancy of regard, as the ſeafaring man obſerves his compaſs. Let us become as thoroughly acquainted with this ſacred chart, as the pilot is with every truſty mark, that gives notice of a lurking rock; and with every open road, that yields a ſafe paſſage into the port. Above all, let us commit ourſelves to this infallible guidance, with the ſame implicit reſignation; let us conform our conduct to its exalted precepts, with the ſame ſedulous care, as the children of *Iſrael*, when ſojourning in the trackleſs deſert, followed the pillar of fire, and the motions of the miraculous cloud.—So will it introduce us, not into an earthly *Canaan*, flowing with milk and honey; but into an *immortal* paradiſe, where is the fulneſs of joy, and where are pleaſures for evermore. It will introduce us into thoſe happy, happy regions, where *our ſun ſhall no more go down, nor our moon withdraw itſelf; for the LORD ſhall be our everlaſting light, and the days of our mourning*, together with the fatigues of our pilgrimage, *ſhall be ended* *.

I PERCEIVE a great *variety* in the ſize and ſplendor of thoſe gems of heaven. Some are of the firſt magnitude; others of an inferior order. Some *glow* with intenſe flames: others *glimmer* with fainter beams. Yet *all* are beautiful; all have their peculiar luſtre, and diſtinct uſe; all tend, in their different degrees, to enamel the cope of heaven, and embroider the robe of night.

* Iſ. lx. 20.

night.—This circumſtance is remarked by an author, whoſe ſentiments are a ſource of wiſdom, and the very ſtandard of truth. "One ſtar," ſays the Apoſtle of the *Gentiles*, "*differeth* from another ſtar in glory: "ſo alſo is the reſurrection of the dead."

In the world above, are various *degrees* of happineſs, various ſeats of honour. Some will riſe to more illuſtrious diſtinctions, and richer joys *. Some, like veſſels of ample capacity, will admit more copious acceſſions of light and excellence. Yet there will be no want, no deficiency, in any; but a fulneſs both of divine ſatisfactions, and perſonal perfections. *Each* will enjoy *all* the good, and be adorned with *all* the glory, that his heart can wiſh, or his condition receive.—None will know what it is to envy. Not the leaſt malevolence, nor the leaſt ſelfiſhneſs, but everlaſting friendſhip prevails, and a mutual complacency in each others delight. Love, cordial love, will give every particular ſaint a participation of all the fruitions †, which are diffuſed through the whole aſſembly of the bleſſed.—No one *eclipſes*, but each *reflects light* upon his brother. A ſweet interchange of rays ſubſiſts; all enlightened by the great Fountain, and all enlightening one another. By which reciprocal communication of pleaſure and amity, each will be continually *receiving from*, each inceſſantly *adding to*, the general felicity.

Happy, ſupremely happy they, who are admitted into the celeſtial manſions. Better to be a door-keeper in thoſe "ivory palaces ‡," than to fill the moſt gorgeous

* 1 *Cor.* xv. 41, 42. The great Mr *Mede prefers* the ſenſe here given; and the learned Dr *Hammond admits* it into his paraphraſe: whoſe joint authority, though far from excluding any *other*, yet is a ſufficient warrant for *this* application of the words.

† *Tolle invidiam, et tuum eſt quod habeo; tolle invidiam, et meum eſt quod habes.* AUGUSTINE.

‡ Pſal. xlv. 8.

gorgeous throne on earth, The very loweſt place at GOD's right hand, is diſtinguiſhed honour, and conſummate bliſs.—O! that we may, in ſome meaſure, anticipate that beatific ſtate, while we remain in our baniſhment below! May we, *by rejoicing* in the ſuperior proſperity of another, make it *our own!* and, provided the general reſult is harmony, be content, be pleaſed with whatſoever part is aſſigned to our ſhare in the univerſal choir of affairs.

WHILE I am conſidering the heavenly bodies, I muſt not entirely forget thoſe fundamental laws of our modern aſtronomy, *projection* and *attraction*. One of which is the all-combining cement, the other is the ever-operative ſpring, of the mighty frame.—In the beginning, the all-creating FIAT impreſſed a proper degree of motion on each of thoſe whirling orbs: Which, if not controlled, would have carried them on, in ſtrait lines, and to endleſs lengths; till they were even loſt in the abyſs of ſpace. But the *gravitating* property, being added to the *projectile* force, determined their courſes to a *circular* * form; and obliged the reluctant rovers to perform their deſtined rounds.

* I am aware, the planetary orbits are not ſtrictly circular, but rather *elliptical*. However, as they are but a ſmall remove from the perfectly round figure, and partake of it incomparably more than the trajectories of the comets, I chuſe to repreſent the thing in this view. Eſpecially, becauſe the notion of a circle is ſo much more intelligible to the generality of readers, than that of an ellipſis; and becauſe I laid it down for a rule, not to admit any ſuch *abſtruſe* ſentiment, or *difficult* expreſſion, as ſhould demand a painful attention, inſtead of raiſing an agreeable idea. For which reaſon, I have avoided *technical* terms; have taken no notice of *Jupiter*'s ſatellites, or *Saturn*'s ring; have not ſo much as mentioned the names of the planets, nor attempted to wade into any depths of the ſcience; leſt, to thoſe who have no opportunity of uſing the teleſcope, or of acquainting themſelves with a ſyſtem of aſtronomy, I ſhould propound riddles, rather than diſplay *entertaining* and *edifying* truths.

rounds.—Were either of those causes to suspend their action, all the harmoniously-moving spheres would be disconcerted; would degenerate into sluggish inactive masses; and, falling into the central fire, be *burnt* to ashes; or else would exorbitate into wild confusion; and each, by the rapidity of its whirl, be *dissipated* into atoms. But the impulsive and attractive energy being most nicely attempered to each other; and, under the immediate operation of the Almighty, exerting themselves in perpetual concert; the various globes run their radiant races, without the least interruption or the least deviation; so as to create the alternate changes of *day* and *night*, and distribute the useful vicissitudes of *succeeding* seasons; so as to answer all the great ends of a gracious providence, and procure every comfortable convenience for universal nature.

Does not this constitution of the material, very naturally lead the thoughts to those grand principles of the moral and devotional world, *faith* and *love*?—These are often celebrated by the inspired apostle, as a comprehensive summary of the gospel *. These inspirit the breast, and regulate the progress, of each private Christian. These unite the whole congregation of the faithful to GOD, and one another: to GOD, the great centre, in the bonds of gratitude and devotion; to one another, by a reciprocal intercourse of brotherly affections, and friendly offices.—If you ask, Why is it impossible for the true believer to live at all adventures? to *stagnate* in sloth, or habitually to *deviate* from duty?—We answer, It is owing to "his faith, working by love †." He assuredly trusts, that CHRIST has sustained the infamy, and endured the torment due to his sins. He firmly relies on that divine propitiation, for the pardon of all his guilt; and humbly expects everlasting salvation, as the purchase of his Saviour's merits. This produces such a spirit of gratitude, as refines his inclinations, and animates

* Col. i. 4. Philem. ver. 5. † Gal. v. 6.

mates his whole behaviour. He cannot, he cannot run to excess of riot; because love to his adorable Redeemer, like a strong, but silken *curb*, sweetly restrains him. He cannot, he cannot lye lulled in a lethargic indolence, because love to the same infinite Benefactor, like a pungent, but endearing *spur*, pleasingly excites him.—In a word, faith supplies the powerful impulse, while love gives the determining bias; and leads the willing feet, through the whole circle of GOD's commandments. By the united efficacy of these *heavenly graces*, the Christian conduct is preserved, in the uniformity and beauty of holiness; as, by the blended power of those *Newtonian principles*, the solar system revolves, in a steady and magnificent regularity.

How admirable, how extensive, how diversified, is the force of this single principle, *attraction* * *!*—This penetrates the very essence of all bodies, and diffuses itself to the remotest limits of the mundane system.—By this, the worlds impressed with motion, hang *self-balanced* on their centres †; and, though orbs of immense magnitude, require nothing but this amazing property for their support.—To this we ascribe a phænomenon, of a very different kind, the *pressure* of the atmosphere; which, though a yielding and expansive fluid, yet constipated by an attractive energy, surrounds the whole globe, and incloses every creature, as it were, with a tight bandage. An expedient this, absolutely necessary to preserve the texture of our bodies; and indeed, to maintain every species of animal existence.—Attraction! Urged by this wonderful impetus, the *rivers* circulate, copious and unintermitted, among all the nations of the earth; sweeping with rapidity down the steeps, or softly ebbing through the plains. Impelled by the same mysterious force, the *nutritious juices* are detached from the soil; and, ascending

* I mean the attraction both of *gravitation* and *cohesion*.

† *Ponderibus librata suis.* OVID.

tending the trees, find their way through millions of the fineſt meanders, in order to transfuſe vegetative life into all the branches.—This confines the *ocean* within proper bounds. Though the waves thereof roar; though they toſs themſelves, with all the madneſs of indignant rage; yet checked by this potent, this inevitable curb, they are unable to paſs even the ſlight barrier of ſand. To this the mountains owe that unſhaken firmneſs, which laughs at the ſhock of careering winds; and bids the tempeſt, with all its mingled horrors, impotently rave. By virtue of this inviſible mechaniſm, without the aid of crane or pulley, or any inſtrument of human device, many thouſand tons of water are *raiſed*, every moment, into the regions of the firmament. By this, they continue *ſuſpended* in thin air, without any capacious ciſtern to contain their ſubſtance, or any maſſy pillars to ſuſtain their weight. By this ſame variouſly-acting power, they return to the place of their native reſidence; *diſtilled* in gentle falls of dew, or *precipitated* in impetuous ſhowers of rain. They *ſlide* into the fields in fleecy flights of ſnow, or are *darted* upon the houſes in clattering ſtorms of hail. This occaſions the ſtrong *coheſion* of ſolid bodies. Without which, our large machines could exert themſelves with no vigour; and the nicer utenſils of life would elude our expectations of ſervice. This affords a foundation for all thoſe delicate or noble mechanic arts, which furniſh mankind with numberleſs conveniences, both of ornament and delight. —In ſhort, this is the prodigious *ballaſt*, which compoſes the equilibrium, and conſtitutes the ſtability of things; this the great *chain*, which forms the connections of univerſal nature; and the mighty *engine*, which prompts, facilitates, and, in good meaſure, accompliſhes all her operations. What *complicated* effects from a ſingle cauſe * ! What profuſion amidſt frugality !

* See another remarkable inſtance of this kind, in the *Reflections*

ty! An unknown profusion of benefits, with the utmost frugality of expence!

And what *is* this attraction? Is it a quality, in its existence, inseparable from matter; and, in its acting independent on the DEITY?—Quite the reverse. It is the very *finger* of GOD; the constant impression of divine power; a principle, neither innate in matter, nor intelligible by mortals.—Does it not, however, bear a considerable analogy to the *agency* of the HOLY GHOST, in the Christian œconomy? Are not the gracious operations of the blessed Spirit, thus *extensive*, thus *admirable*, thus *various*?—That almighty Being transmits his gifts through every age, and communicates his graces to every adherent on the Redeemer. All, either of illustrious memory, or of beneficial tendency; in a word, "all the good that "is done upon earth, he doth it himself." Strong in *his* aid, and in the power of *his* might, the saints of all times have trod vice under their feet; have triumphed over this abject world; and conversed in heaven, while they dwelt on earth. *Not I, but the grace of GOD which was with me* *, is the unanimous acknowledgment of them all.—By the same kindly succours, the whole church is still enlightened, quickened, and governed. Through his benign influences, the scales of *ignorance* fall from the understanding; the leprosy of *evil* concupiscence is purged from the will; and the fetters, the more than adamantine fetters of *habitual* iniquity, drop off from the conversation. He breathes even upon dry bones †, and they live: they are animated with faith; they pant with ardent and heavenly desire; they exercise themselves in all the duties of

flections on a Flower Garden, page 179.—together with a fine observation, quoted in the corresponding note.

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

† See that beautiful piece of sacred and allegorical imagery displayed, *Ezek.* xxxvii.

of godlineſs.—His real, though ſecret, inſpiration, diſſolves the flint in the impenitent breaſt, and binds up the ſorrows of the broken heart; raiſes the thoughts high, in the elevations of holy hope; yet lays them low in the humiliations of inward abaſement; *ſteels* the ſoul with impenetrable reſolution, and perſevering fortitude; at the ſame time, *ſoftens* it into a dove-like meekneſs, and *melts* it in penitential ſorrow.

WHEN I contemplate thoſe ample and magnificent ſtructures, erected over all the æthereal plains:—when I look upon them as ſo many ſplendid repoſitories of light, or fruitful abodes of life:—when I remember, that there may be other orbs, vaſtly more remote than thoſe which appear to our unaided ſight; orbs, whoſe effulgence, though travelling ever ſince the creation, is not yet arrived upon our coaſts *:—when I ſtretch my thoughts to the innumerable orders of

* If this conjecture (which has no leſs a perſon than the celebrated Mr *Huygens* for its author) concerning *unſeen ſtars*, be true;—if, to this obſervation, be added, what is affirmed by our ſkilful aſtronomers, that the motion of the rays of light is ſo *ſurpriſingly ſwift*, as to paſs thro' ten millions of miles in a ſingle minute:—how vaſt! beyond imagination vaſt and unmeaſurable, are the ſpaces of the univerſe!—While the mind is diſtended with the *grand idea*; or rather, while ſhe is diſpatching her ableſt powers of piercing judgment, and excurſive fancy; and finds them all *dropt ſhort*; all baffled by the amazing ſubject; permit me to apply that ſpirited exclamation, and noble remark—

— — Say, proud arch,
Built with divine ambition; in diſdain
Of limit built; built in the taſte of heav'n!
Vaſt concave! ample dome! waſt thou deſign'd
A *meet* apartment for the DEITY?
Not ſo: that thought alone thy ſtate impairs:
Thy *lofty* ſinks; and ſhallows thy *profound*;
And ſtreightens thy *diffuſive*.—

Night-Thoughts, N° IX.

of being, which inhabit all those spacious systems; from the *loftiest seraph*, to the lowest reptile; from the armies of angels, which surround the throne of JEHOVAH, to the *puny nations*, which tinge with blue the surface of the plum *, or mantle the standing pool with green:—how various appear the links in this immense chain! how vast the gradations in this universal scale of existence! Yet all these, though ever so vast and various, are the *work* of GOD's hand, and are full of his presence.

He rounded in his palm those dreadfully-large globes, which are pendulous in the vault of heaven. He kindled those astonishingly-bright fires, which fill the firmament with a flood of glory. By him they are suspended in *fluid* æther, and cannot be shaken: by him they dispense a *perpetual* tide of beams, and are never exhausted.—He formed, with inexpressible nicety, that delicately-fine collection of tubes; that unknown multiplicity of subtile springs, which organize and actuate the frame of the minutest insect. He bids the crimson current roll; the vital movements play; and associates a world of wonders, even in an *animated point* †.—In all these is a signal exhibition of creating

* Ev'n the *blue down* the purple plum surrounds,
A *living world*, thy failing sight confounds.
To HIM a peopled habitation shews,
Where millions taste the bounty GOD bestows.
See a beautiful and instructive poem, styled—DEITY.

† There are living creatures abundantly smaller than the mite. Mr *Bradley*, in his treatise on gardening, mentions an insect, which, after accurate examination, he found to be a thousand times *less* than the *least* visible grain of sand. Yet such an insect, tho' quite imperceptible to the naked eye, is an elephant, is a whale, compared with other animalcules almost infinitely more minute, discovered by Mr *Lewenhoeck*.—If we consider the several limbs which compose such an organized particle; the different muscles which actutate such a set of limbs; the flow of spirits, incomparably more attenuated, which put those muscles

creating power; to all these are extended the special regards of preserving goodness. From hence let me learn to rely on the providence, and to revere the presence, of the Supreme Majesty.

To *rely* on his *providence*.—For, amidst that inconceivable number and variety of beings, which swarm through the regions of creation, not one is overlooked, not one is neglected, by the great omnipotent Cause of all. However inconsiderable in its character, or diminutive in its size, it is still the production of the universal Maker, and belongs to the family of the almighty Father!—What tho' inthroned archangels enjoy the *smiles* of his *countenance!* yet the low inhabitants of the earth, the most despicable worms of the ground, are not excluded from his *providential care*. Tho' the manifestation of his perfections is vouchsafed to holy and intellectual essences; his ear is open to the cries of the young raven. His eye is attentive to the wants, and to the welfare, of the very meanest births of nature.—How much less, then, are his own people disregarded? those, for whom he has delivered his beloved Son to death, and for whom he has prepared habitations of eternal joy. *They* disregarded! No. THEY are "kept as the apple of an eye." The very hairs of their head are all numbered. The fondest mother may *forget* the infant, that is "dandled upon her "knees," and sucks at her breast *, much sooner than

muscles in motion; the various fluids which circulate; the different secretions which are performed; together with the peculiar minuteness of the solids, before they arrive at their full growth; not to mention other *more astonishing* modes of diminution:—sure, we shall have the utmost reason to acknowledge, that the adored Maker is—MAXIMUS IN MINIMIS; *greatly glorious* even in his *smallest* works.

* *Is.* xlix. 15. *Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee.*—How delicate and expressive

than the Father of everlasting compassions can *discontinue*, or *remit*, his watchful tenderness to his people —his children—his heirs.

Let this teach me also a more lively sense of the *divine presence*.—All the rolling worlds above, all the living atoms below, together with all the beings that intervene betwixt these wide extremes, are vouchers for an ever-present Deity. "GOD has not left himself "without witness." The marks of his footsteps are evident

pressive are the images in this charming scripture! How full of *beauty*, if beheld in a critical, how rich with *consolation*, if considered in a believing, view!—Can a *woman!* one of the softer sex; whose nature is most impressible, and whose passions are remarkably tender;—can such a one, not barely disregard, but entirely *forget;* not suspend her care for a while, but utterly erase the very memory—of her *child;* her own child, not another's; a child that was formed in her *womb*, and is a part of herself?—her *son;* the more important, and therefore more desirable species; to whom it peculiarly belongs to preserve the name, and build up the family:—her *only* son; for the world is singular, and refers to a case, where the offspring, not being numerous, but centered in a single birth, must be productive of the fondest endearment:—Can she divest herself of all concern for such a child; not when he is grown up to maturity, or gone abroad from her house; but while he continues in an infantile state, and must owe his whole safety to her kind attendance; while he lyes in her bosom, rests on her arm, and even *sucks* at her breast?—Especially, if the poor innocent be racked with pain, or seized by some severe affliction; and so become an object of *compassion*, as well as of love. Can she hear its piercing cries; can she see it all restless, all helpless, under its misery; and feel no emotions of parental pity?—If *one* such monster of inhumanity might be found; could *all* (here the prophet, to give his comparison the utmost energy, changes the singular number into the plural. It is not הוא גם, or אחת גם but אלה גם, could *all*) mothers be so degenerate? This, sure, cannot be suspected, need not be feared. Much less need the true believer be apprehensive of the failure of my kindness. An *universal* extinction of those *strongest* affections of nature, is a more supposable case, than that I should ever be unmindful of my people, or regardless of their interests.

evident in every place, and the touches of his finger distinguishable in every creature. "*Thy name is so nigh*, "O thou all-supporting, all-informing LORD; *and* "*that do thy wondrous works declare* *. Thy goodness "warms in the morning-sun, and refreshes in the even- "ing-breeze. Thy glory shines in the lamps of mid- "night, and smiles in the blossoms of spring. We "see *a trace* of thy incomprehensible grandeur in the "*boundless* extent of things; and a *sketch* of thy ex- "quisite skill, in those almost *evanescent* sparks of life, "the insect race."—How stupid is this heart of mine, that, amidst such a multitude of remembrancers, thronging on every side, I should forget thee a single moment! Grant me, thou great I AM; thou source and support of universal existence;—O grant me, an enlightened eye, to *discern* thee in every object; and a devout heart, to *adore* thee on every occasion. Instead of living without GOD in the world, may I be ever with him, and see all things full of him!

——*The glitt'ring stars,*
By the deep ear of meditation heard,
Still in their midnight-watches sing of HIM.
He nods a calm. The tempest blows his wrath.
The thunder is his voice; and the red flash
His speedy sword of justice. At his touch
The mountains flame. He shakes the solid earth,
And rocks the nations. Nor in these alone,
In ev'ry common instance *God is seen.*

THOMSON's Spring.

IF the beautiful spangles which a clear night pours on the beholder's eye; if those other fires which beam, in remoter skies, and are discoverable only by, that revelation to the sight, the telescope; if all those *bright millions* are so many fountains of day, enriched with native and independent lustre, illuminating planets, and

* Psal. lxxv. 2.

and enlivening systems of their own * : what pomp, how majestic and splendid, is disclosed in the midnight-scene ! What *riches* are disseminated through all those numberless provinces of the great JEHOVAH's empire. —Grandeur beyond expression !—Yet there is not the meanest slave, but carries *greater* wealth in his own bosom, possesses *superior* dignity in his own person. The *soul*, that informs his clay ;—The soul, that teaches him to think, and enables him to chuse ; that qualifies him to relish rational pleasure, and to breathe sublime desire † ;—The soul, that is endowed with such noble faculties, and above all, is distinguished with the *dreadful*, the *glorious* capacity, of being pained, or blessed for ever ;—this soul surpasses in worth, whatever the eye can see ; whatever of material the fancy can imagine. Before one such intellectual being, all the treasure and all the magnificence of unintelligent creation becomes poor and contemptible ‡. For this soul,

* Consult with Reason, Reason will reply,
Each *lucid point*, which glows in yonder sky,
Informs a *system* in the boundless space,
And fills, with glory, its appointed place :
With beams unborrow'd, brightens other skies ;
And worlds, to thee unknown, with heat and life supplies.
The Universe.

† In *this* respect, as vested with such capacities, the soul even of fallen men has an unquestionable greatness and dignity ; is *majestic, though in ruin.*

‡ I beg leave to transcribe a pertinent passage, from that celebrated master of reason, and universal literature, Dr *Bentley* ; whom no one can be tempted to suspect either tinctured with enthusiasm, or warped to bigotry.—" If we consider," says he, " the dignity of an intelligent being, and put that in " the scale against brute and inanimate matter, we may affirm, " without overvaluing human nature, that the soul of one " virtuous and religious man is of greater worth and excellen- " cy, than the sun, and his planets, and all the stars in the " world." See his sermons at *Boyle*'s lect. N° 8.

ſoul, Omnipotence itſelf has waked, and worked, through every age. To *convince* this ſoul, the fundamental laws of nature have been controlled; and the moſt amazing miracles have alarmed all the ends of the earth. To *inſtruct* this ſoul, the wiſdom of heaven has been transfuſed into the ſacred page; and miſſionaries have been ſent from the great King, who reſides in light unapproachable. To *ſanctify* this ſoul, the almighty Comforter takes the wings of a dove; and, with a ſweet transforming influence, broods on the human heart. And O! to *redeem* this ſoul from guilt, to reſcue it from hell, the heaven of heavens was bowed, and GOD himſelf came down to dwell in duſt!

Let me pauſe a while upon this important ſubject.—What are the ſchemes which engage the attention of eminent ſtateſmen, and mighty monarchs, compared with the grand intereſts of an immortal ſoul? The ſupport of commerce, and the ſucceſs of armies, though extremely weighty affairs; yet, if laid in the balance againſt the ſalvation of a ſoul, are lighter than the downy feather, poiſed againſt talents of gold. To ſave a navy from *ſhipwreck*, or a kingdom from *ſlavery*, are deliverances of the moſt momentous nature, which the tranſactions of mortality can admit. But O! how they ſhrink into an inconſiderable trifle, if (their aſpect upon immortality forgot) they are ſet in competition with the delivery of a ſingle ſoul, from the anguiſh and horrors of a *diſtreſſed eternity* *!

Is ſuch the importance of the ſoul! what vigilance then can be *too much*, or rather what holy ſolicitude can be *ſufficient*, for the overſeers of the Saviour's flock and the guardians of this great, this venerable, this invaluable charge?—Since ſuch is the importance of the ſoul, wilt thou not, O man, be watchful for the preſervation

* Not all yon luminaries quench'd at once
Were half ſo ſad as one benighted mind,
Which gropes for happineſs and meets deſpair
Night-Thoughts, Nº IX.

preſervation of thy own? Shall every caſual incident awaken thy concern; every tranſitory toy command thy regard? and ſhall the welfare of thy ſoul, a work of continual occurrence, a work of endleſs conſequence, ſue, in vain, for thy ſerious care. Thy ſoul, thy ſoul is thy all. If this be *ſecured*, thou art greatly rich, and wilt be unſpeakably happy. If this be *loſt*, a whole world acquired, will leave thee in poverty; and all its delights enjoyed, will abandon thee to miſery.

I HAVE often been charmed, and awed, at the ſight of the nocturnal heavens; even before I knew how to conſider them in their proper circumſtances of majeſty and beauty. *Something*, like *magic*, has ſtruck my mind, on a tranſient and unthinking ſurvey of the æthereal vault, tinged throughout with the pureſt azure, and decorated with innumerable ſtarry lamps. I have felt, I know not what, powerful and aggrandizing impulſe; which ſeemed to ſnatch me from the low entanglements of vanity, and prompted an ardent ſigh for *ſublimer objects*. Methought, I heard, even from the ſilent ſpheres, a commanding call, to ſpurn the abject earth, and pant after unſeen delights.—Henceforward, I hope to imbibe more copiouſly this *moral emanation* of the ſkies, when, in ſome ſuch manner as the preceding, they are rationally ſeen, and the ſight is duly improved. The ſtars, I truſt, will *teach* as well as *ſhine*; and help to diſpel, both nature's gloom, and my intellectual darkneſs. To ſome people, they diſcharge no better a ſervice, than that of holding a flambeau to their feet, and ſoftening the horrors of their night. To me and my friends, may they act as miniſters of a ſuperior order, as counſellors of wiſdom, and guides to happineſs! Nor will they fail to execute this nobler office, if they gently light our way into the knowledge of their adored Maker; if they point out, with their ſilver rays, our path to his beatific preſence.

I gaze,

I gaze, I ponder. I ponder, I gaze; and think ineffable things.—I roll an eye of awe and admiration. Again and again I repeat my raviſhed views; and can never ſatiate either my curioſity, or my inquiry. I ſpring my thoughts into this immenſe field, till even Fancy tires upon her wing. I find wonders *ever new*; wonders more and *more amazing*.—Yet, after all my preſent inquiries, what a mere *nothing* do I know; by all my future ſearches, how *little* ſhall I be able to learn, of thoſe vaſtly diſtant ſuns, and their circling retinue of worlds! Could I pry with *Newton*'s piercing ſagacity, or launch into his extenſive ſurveys; even then my apprehenſions would be little better, than thoſe dim and ſcanty images, which the *mole*, juſt emerged from her cavern, receives on her feeble optic.—This, ſure, ſhould repreſs all impatient or immoderate ardor to pry into the ſecrets of the ſtarry ſtructures, and make me more particularly careful to cultivate my heart. To fathom the depths of the divine eſſence, or to ſcan univerſal nature with a critical exactneſs, is an attempt which ſets the *acuteſt philoſopher* very nearly on a level with *the idiot*; ſince it is almoſt, if not altogether, as impracticable by the former, as by the latter.

Be it, then, my chief ſtudy, not to purſue what is abſolutely unattainable; but rather to ſeek what is obvious to find, eaſy to be acquired, and of ineſtimable advantage when poſſeſſed. O! let me ſeek *that charity* which edifieth*, *that faith* which purifieth.

Love,

* 1 *Cor.* viii. 1. I need not inform my reader, that in this text, in that admirable chapter, 1 *Cor.* xiii. and in various other paſſages of ſcripture, the word *charity* ſhould by no means be confined to the particular act of *alms-giving*, or external beneficence. It is of a much more exalted and extenſive nature. It ſignifies that divinely-precious grace, which warms the ſoul with *ſupreme love* to GOD, and enlarges it with *diſintereſted affection* for men. Which renders it the reigning care of

Love, humble love, not conceited ſcience, keeps the door of heaven. Faith, a child-like faith in *Jeſus*; not the haughty ſelf-ſufficient ſpirit, which ſcorns to be ignorant of any thing; preſents a key * to thoſe abodes of bliſs.

This preſent ſtate is the ſcene deſtined to the *exerciſe of devotion*; the inviſible world is the place appointed for the *enjoyment* of *knowledge*. There the dawn of our infantile minds will be advanced to the maturity of perfect day; or rather, there our midnight-ſhades will be brightened into all the luſtré of noon. There the ſouls which come from the ſchool of faith, and bring with them the principles of love, will dwell in light itſelf; will be obſcured with no darkneſs at all; will know, even as they are known†.—Such an unacquaintance, therefore, do I deſire to form, and to carry on ſuch a correſpondence, with the heavenly bodies, as may ſhed a benign influence on the ſeeds of grace implanted in my breaſt. Let the exalted tracts of the firmament ſink my ſoul into *deep humiliation*. Let thoſe eternal fires kindle in my heart an *adoring gratitude* to their almighty Sovereign. Let yonder ponderous and enormous globes, which reſt on his ſupporting arm, teach me an *unſhaken affiance* in their incarnate Maker. Then ſhall I be—if not wiſe as the aſtronomical adept, yet WISE UNTO SALVATION.

HAVING now walked and worſhipped in this *univerſal temple*, that is arched with ſkies, emblazed with ſtars,

the life, and chief delight of the heart, to promote the happineſs of the one, and the glory of the other.—*This, this* is that charity of which ſo many excellent things are every where ſpoken; which can never be too highly extolled, or too earneſtly coveted, ſince it is the image of GOD, and the very ſpirit of heaven.

* The righteouſneſs of CHRIST. This is what MILTON beatifully ſtyles,

——*The golden key,*
That opes the palace of Eternity.

† 1 Cor. xiii, 12.

ſtars, and extended even to immenſity :—having caſt an eye, like the enraptured patriarch* ; an eye of *reaſon* and *devotion*, through the magnificent ſcene : with the former, having diſcovered an infinitude of worlds ; and with the latter, having met the Deity in every view :—having beheld, as *Moſes* in the flaming buſh, a *glimpſe* of JEHOVAH's excellencies ! reflected from the ſeveral planets, and ſtreaming from myriads of celeſtial luminaries :—having read various leſſons in that ſtupendous *book* of *wiſdom* †, where unmeaſurable ſheets of azure compoſe the page ; and orbs of radiance write in everlaſting characters, a *comment* on our creed :—what remains, but that I cloſe the midnight-ſolemnity, as our LORD concluded his grand ſacramental inſtitution, with a *ſong* of *praiſe* ? —And behold a hymn, ſuited to the ſublime occaſion, indited by ‡ inſpiration itſelf, transferred into our language, by ‖ one of the happieſt efforts of human ingenuity.

The ſpacious firmament on high,
With all the blue æthereal ſky,
And ſpangled heav'ns, a ſhining frame,
Their great Original proclaim :
Th' unweary'd Sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's pow'r diſplay ;
And publiſhes to ev'ry land,
The work of an almighty hand.

Soon as the ev'ning-ſhades prevail,
The Moon takes up the wondrous tale ;
And nightly, to the liſt'ning Earth,
Repeats the ſtory of her birth :

While

* Gen. xv. 5.

† —— For heaven
Is as the *book of* GOD before thee ſet,
Wherein to read his wondrous works.—MILT.

‡ Pſal. xix.

‖ ADDISON, *Spect.* vol. VI. N° 465.

While all the ſtars, that round her burn
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And ſpread the truth from pole to pole.

What though, in ſolemn ſilence, all
Move round the dark terreſtrial ball?
What though nor real voice nor ſound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In Reaſon's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever ſinging, as they ſhine,
The hand that made us is divine.

A

WINTER-PIECE.

Storms and Tempeſts may calm *the ſoul—Snow and Ice be taught to* warm *the heart, and praiſe the Creator.*
Anonym. Lett. to the Author. See p. 440.

A

WINTER-PIECE.

'TIS true, in the delightful ſeaſons, HIS tenderneſs and HIS love are moſt eminently diſplayed.—In the *vernal* months, all is beauty to the eye, and muſic to the ear. The clouds drop fatneſs; the air ſoftens into balm; and flowers in rich abundance ſpring where-ever we tread, bloom where-ever we look.—Amidſt the burning heats of *ſummer*, HE expands the leaves, and thickens the ſhades. He ſpreads the cooling arbor to receive us, and awakes the gentle breeze to fan us. The moſs ſwells into a couch, for the repoſe of our bodies; while the rivulet ſoftly rolls, and ſweetly murmurs, to ſooth our imagination.—In *autumn*, HIS bounty covers the fields with a profuſion of nutrimental treaſure, and bends the boughs with loads of delicious fruit. He furniſhes his hoſpitable board with preſent plenty, and prepares a copious magazine for future wants.—But is it *only* in theſe ſmiling periods of the year, that GOD, the all-gracious GOD, is ſeen? Has *winter*, ſtern winter, no tokens of his preſence? Yes: all things are eloquent of his praiſe. "His way is in the whirlwind." Storms and tempeſts fulfil his word, and extol his power. Even piercing froſts bear witneſs to his goodneſs, while they bid the ſhivering nations tremble at his wrath.

wrath.—Be winter then, for a while, our theme *. Perhaps, those *barren* scenes may be *fruitful* of intellectual improvement. Perhaps, that rigorous cold, which binds the earth in icy chains, may serve to enlarge our hearts, and warm them with holy love.

See! how the *day* is *shortened?*—The sun, detained in fairer climes, or engaged in more agreeable services, rises, like an unwilling visitant, with tardy and reluctant steps. He walks, with a shy indifference, along the edges of the southern sky; casting an oblique glance, he just looks upon our dejected world; and scarcely scatters light through the thick air. Dim is his appearance, languid are his gleams, while he continues. Or, if he chance to wear a brighter aspect, and a cloudless brow; yet, like the young and gay in the house of mourning, he seems uneasy, till he is gone, is in haste to depart.—And let him depart. Why should we wish for his longer stay, since he can shew us nothing but the creation in distress? The flowery families lye dead, and the tuneful tribes are struck dumb. The trees, stript of their verdure, and lashed by storms, spread their naked arms to the enraged and relentless heavens. Fragrance no longer floats in the air; but chilling damps hover, or cutting gales blow. Nature, divested of all her beautiful robes, sits, like a forlorn disconsolate widow, in her weeds.

* A sketch of this nature, I must acknowledge, is quite different from the subject of the book; and, I cannot but declare, was as far distant from the thoughts of the author. But the desire of *several* acquaintance, together with an intimation of its usefulness, by a very *polite letter* from an *unknown* hand, (which has *undesignedly* furnished me with the best motto I could recollect,) prevailed with me to add a few descriptive touches, and improving hints, on what is so often experienced in these northern regions. I hope, the attempt I have made to oblige these gentlemen, will obtain the *approbation*, or, at least, the *excuse*, of my other readers.

weeds. While winds, in doleful accents, howl; and rains, in repeated showers, weep.

We regret not, therefore, the speedy departure of the day. When the room is hung with *funeral black*, and dismal objects are all around, who would desire to have the *glimmering taper* kept alive? which can only discover spectacles of sorrow, can only make the horror visible. —And, since this mortal life is little better than a continual conflict with sin, or an unremitted struggle with misery; is it not a *gracious* ordination, which has reduced our age to a *span?* Fourscore years of trial, for the virtuous, are sufficiently long; and more than such a term allowed to the wicked, would render them beyond all measure vile. Our way to the kingdom of heaven lyes through tribulations. Shall we then *accuse*, shall we not rather *bless*, the providence, which has made the passage short? Soon, soon we cross the vale of tears; and then arrive on the happy hills, where light for ever shines, where joy for ever smiles.

SOMETIMES the day is rendered shorter still; is almost blotted out from the year *. The vapours gather; they thicken into an impenetrable gloom, and obscure the face of the sky. At length, the *rains* descend. The sluices of the firmament are opened; and the low-hung clouds pour their congregated stores. Copious and unintermitted, still they pour, and still are unexhausted. The waters drop incessantly from the eaves, and rush in rapid streams from the spouts. They roar along the channelled pavements, and stand in foul shallows amidst the village-streets. Now, if the inattentive eye, or negligent hand, has left the roof but scantily covered; the insinuating element finds its way into every flaw, and oozing through the ceiling, at once upbraids and chastises the careless inhabitant. The ploughman,

* Involvere diem nimbi, et *nox humida* cœlum
Abstulit.— VIRG.

ploughman, ſoaked to the ſkin, leaves his half-tilled acre. The poor poultry, dripping with wet, croud into ſhelter. The tenants of the bough fold up their wings, afraid to launch into the ſtreaming air. The beaſts, joyleſs and diſpirited, ruminate under their ſheds. The roads ſwim, and the brooks ſwell.—The *river*, amidſt all this watery ferment, long contained itſelf within its appointed bounds: but, ſwollen by innumerable currents, and rouſed at laſt into uncontrollable rage, burſts over its banks, ſhoots into the plain, bears down all oppoſition, ſpreads itſelf far and wide, and buries the meadow under a brown, ſluggiſh, ſoaking *deluge*.

How happy for man, that this inundation comes, when there are no flowery crops in the valley, to be overwhelmed; no fields ſtanding thick with corn, to be laid waſte! At *ſuch* a juncture, it would have been *ruin* to the huſbandman and his family: but, *thus* timed, it yields *manure* for his ground, and promiſes him *riches* in reverſion.—How often, and how long, has the divine Majeſty bore with the moſt injurious affronts from ſinners! His goodneſs triumphed over their perverſeneſs, and graciouſly refuſed to be exaſperated. But, O preſumptuous creatures, multiply no longer your provocations. Urge not, by repeated iniquities, the almighty arm to ſtrike; leſt his long-ſuffering ceaſe, and his fierce anger break forth; break forth like a *flood of waters* *, and ſweep you away into irrecoverable and everlaſting perdition.

How mighty! how majeſtic! and O how myſterious are thy works, thou GOD of heaven, and LORD of nature! When the air is calm, where ſleep the *ſtormy winds?* In what chambers are they repoſed, or in what dungeons confined? till thou art pleaſed to awaken their rage, and throw open their priſon-doors. Then,

* Hoſ. v. 10.

Then, with irreſiſtible impetuoſity they fly forth, ſcattering dread, and menacing deſtruction.

The atmoſphere is hurled into the moſt tumultuous confuſion. The æreal torrent burſts its way over mountains, ſeas, and continents. All things feel the dreadful ſhock. All things tremble before the furious blaſt. The *foreſt*, vexed and tore, groans under the ſcourge. Her ſturdy ſons are ſtrained to the very root, and almoſt ſweep the ſoil they were wont to ſhade. The ſtubborn oak, that diſdains to bend, is daſhed headlong to the ground; and, with ſhattered arms, with proſtrate trunk, blocks the road.—While the flexile reed, that ſprings up in the marſh, yielding to the guſt, (as the *meek* and pliant temper to injuries, or the *reſigned* and patient ſpirit to misfortunes,) eludes the force of the ſtorm, and ſurvives amidſt the wide-ſpread havock.

For a moment, the turbulent and outrageous ſky ſeems to be aſſuaged; but it intermits its wrath, only to increaſe its ſtrength. Soon the ſounding ſquadrons of the air return to the attack, and renew their ravages with redoubled fury. The ſtately dome rocks amidſt the wheeling clouds. The impregnable tower totters on its baſis, and threatens to overwhelm whom it was intended to protect. The ragged rock is rent in pieces * ? and even the hills, the perpetual hills, on their deep foundations, are ſcarcely ſecure.—Where now is the place of ſafety? when the *city* reels, and houſes become heaps! Sleep affrighted flies. Diverſion is turned into horror. All is uproar in the element; all is conſternation among mortals; and nothing, but one wide ſcene of rueful devaſtation, thro' the land.—Yet this is only an *inferior* miniſter of divine diſpleaſure; the executioner of *milder* indignation. How then,—O! *how will the lofty looks of man be humbled, and the haughtineſs of men be bowed down,*

* 1 Kings xix. 11.

down *, when the LORD GOD omnipotent ſhall *meditate* terror,—when he ſhall ſet *all* his terrors in array,—when he riſes to judge the nations, and to *ſhake terribly* the earth?

The *ocean* ſwells with tremendous commotions. The ponderous waves are heaved from their capacious bed, and almoſt lay bare the unfathomable deep. Flung into the moſt rapid agitation, they ſweep over the rocks; they laſh the lofty cliffs; and toſs themſelves into the clouds. Navies are rent from their anchors; and, with all their enormous load, are whirled, ſwift as the arrow, wild as the winds, along the vaſt abyſs. —Now they climb the rolling mountain; they plough the frightful ridge; and ſeem to ſkim the ſkies. Anon they plunge into the opening gulf; they loſe the ſight of day; and are loſt themſelves to every eye. How vain is the pilot's art! how impotent the mariner's ſtrength! They reel to and fro, and ſtagger in the jarring hold; or cling to the cordage, while burſting ſeas foam over the deck. *Deſpair* is in every face, and *death* ſits threatening on every ſurge.—But why, O ye aſtoniſhed mariners, why ſhould you abandon yourſelves to deſpair? Is the LORD's hand *ſhortened*, becauſe the waves of the ſea rage horribly? Is his ear *deafened* by the roaring thunders, and the bellowing tempeſt? Cry, cry unto HIM, who "holdeth "the

* ——— *Mortalia corda*
Per gentes humilis ſtravit pavor.—

One would almoſt imagine, that *Virgil* had read *Iſaiah*, and borrowed his ideas from chap. ii. ver. 11. The *humilis* and *ſtravit* of the one ſo exactly correſpond with the—*humbled*—*bowed down*—of the other. But, in one circumſtance, the prophet is very much ſuperior to the poet. The prophet, by giving a ſtriking *contraſt* to his ſentiments, repreſents them with incomparably-greater energy. He ſays not, *men* in the groſs, or the *human heart* in general: but men of the moſt *elated* looks; hearts big with the moſt *arrogant* imaginations; even *theſe* ſhall ſtoop from their ſupercilious heights; even *theſe* ſhall grovel in the duſt of abaſement, and ſhudder with all the extremes of an abject puſillanimity.

" the winds in his fiſt, and the waters in the hollow " of his hand." HE is all-gracious to hear, and almighty to ſave. If HE command, the ſtorm ſhall be huſhed to ſilence; the billows ſhall ſubſide into a calm; the lightnings ſhall lay their fiery bolts aſide; and, inſtead of ſinking in a watery grave, you ſhall find yourſelves brought to the deſired haven.

SOMETIMES, after a joyleſs day, a more diſmal *night* ſucceeds.—The lazy, louring vapours had wove ſo thick a veil, as the meridian ſun could ſcarcely penetrate. What gloom then muſt overwhelm the nocturnal hours! The moon withdraws her ſhining. Not a ſingle ſtar is able to ſtruggle through the deep arrangement of ſhades. All is *pitchy darkneſs*, without one enlivening ray. How ſolemn! how awful! 'Tis like the ſhroud of nature, or the return of chaos. I don't wonder, that it is the parent of terrors, and ſo apt to engender melancholy.—Lately the tempeſt marked its rapid way with *miſchief;* now the night dreſſes her ſilent pavilion with *horror*.

I have *ſometimes* left the beaming tapers, withdrawn from the ruddy fire, and plunged into the thickeſt of theſe ſooty ſhades; without regretting the change, rather exulting in it as a welcome deliverance. The very gloom was pleaſing, was exhilarating, compared with the converſation I quitted. The ſpeech of my companions (how does it grieve me, that I ſhould *even once* have occaſion to call them by *that* name!) was the language of darkneſs; was horror to the ſoul, and torture to the ear*.—*Their teeth were ſpears and arrows, and*

* What has been ſaid, I aſk'd my ſoul, what done?
How flow'd our mirth? or whence the ſource begun?
Perhaps, the jeſt, that charm'd the ſprightly croud,
And made the jovial table laugh ſo loud,
To ſome *falſe* notion ow'd its poor pretence,
To an ambiguous word's perverted ſenſe;
To a wild ſonnet, or a wanton air,
Offence and torture to the ſober ear.

Perhaps,

and their tongue a sharp sword, to stab and assassinate their neighbour's character. *Their throat was an open sepulchre*, gaping to devour the reputation of the innocent, or tainting the air with their virulent and polluted breath.—Sometimes, their licentious and ungovernable discourse shot arrows of *profaneness* against heaven itself; and, in proud defiance, challenged the resentment of Omnipotence.—Sometimes, as if it was the glory of human nature, to cherish the *grossest* appetites of the brute; or the mark of a gentleman, to have served an apprenticeship in a brothel; the filthiest jests of the stews (if low *obscenity* can be a jest) were nauseously obtruded on the company. All the *modest* part were offended and grieved; while the other besotted creatures laughed aloud, tho' the leprosy of uncleanness appeared on their lips.—Are not these persons *prisoners* of *darkness*, tho' blazing sconces pour artificial day through their rooms? Are not their souls immured in the most baleful shades, tho' the noontide sun is brightened by flaming on their gilded chariots?—They discern not that great and adorable Being, who fills the universe with his infinite and glorious presence; who is *all eye*, to observe their actions; *all ear*, to examine their words. They know not the all-sufficient Redeemer, nor the unspeakable blessedness of his heavenly kingdom. They are groping for the prize of happiness; but will certainly grasp the thorn of anxiety. They are wantonly sporting on the brink of a precipice; and are every moment in danger of falling headlong into *irretrievable* ruin, and *endless* despair.

They have forced me out, and are, perhaps, deriding me in my absence; are charging my reverence for the ever-present GOD, and my concern for the dignity

> Perhaps, alas! the pleasing stream was brought
> From this man's error, from another's fault;
> From topics, which good-nature would forget,
> And *prudence* mention with the last regret.
>
> *Prior's Solomon.*

nity of our *rational* nature, to the account of humour and singularity; to narrowness of thought, or sourness of temper. Be it so. I will indulge no indignation against them. If any thing like it *should* arise, I will convert it into prayer: "Pity them, O thou "Father of mercies! Shew them the madness of their "profaneness! Shew them the baseness of their vile "ribaldry! Let their dissolute rant be turned into "silent sorrow and confusion; till they open their "lips, to adore thine *insulted* Majesty, and to implore "thy gracious pardon. Till they devote to thy ser-"vice, those social hours, and those superior faculties, "which they are now abusing, to the dishonour of "thy name, to the contamination of their own souls, "and (unless timely repentance intervene) to their "everlasting infamy and perdition."

I ride home amidst the gloomy void. All darkling and solitary, I can scarce discern my horse's head; and only guess out my blind road. *No companion*, but danger; or, perhaps, "destruction ready at my side *."

But, why do I fancy myself *solitary?* Is not the Father of lights, the GOD of my life, the great and everlasting friend, always at my right hand? Because the day is excluded, is his omnipresence vacated? Though I have no earthly acquaintance near, to assist in case of a misfortune; or to beguile the time, and divert uneasy suspicions, by entertaining conferences; may I not lay my help upon the Almighty, and converse with GOD by humble supplication? For this exercise no place is improper, no hour unseasonable, and no posture incommodious. This is *society*, the best of society, even in solitude. This is a fund of delights, easily portable, and quite inexhaustible. A *treasure* this of unknown value; liable to no hazard from wrong or robbery; but perfectly secure to the lonely wanderer, in the most darksome paths.

And

* Job xviii. 12.

And why ſhould I diſtreſs myſelf with apprehenſions of *peril?* This acceſs to GOD is not only an indefeaſible privilege, but a kind of *ambulatory garriſon.* Thoſe who make known their requeſts unto GOD, and rely upon his protecting care; he gives *his angels* charge over their welfare. His angels are commiſſioned to eſcort them in their travelling; and to hold up their goings, that they daſh not their foot againſt a ſtone *. Nay, *he himſelf* condeſcends to be their guardian, and "keeps all their bones, ſo that not one of them is "broken." Between theſe perſons, and the moſt miſchievous objects, a treaty of peace is concluded. The articles of this grand alliance are recorded in the book of revelation; and will, when it is for the real benefit of believers, aſſuredly be made good, in the adminiſtrations of Providence. *In that day*, ſaith the LORD, *will I make a covenant for them with the beaſts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground;* and they *ſhall be in league with the ſtones of the field* †. Though they fall headlong on the flints; even the flints, fitted to fracture the ſkull, ſhall receive them as into the arms of friendſhip, and not offer to hurt whom the LORD is pleaſed to preſerve.

May I then enjoy the preſence of this gracious GOD, and darkneſs and light ſhall be both alike. Let HIM whiſper peace to my conſcience; and this dread ſilence ſhall be more charming than the voice of eloquence, or the ſtrains of muſic. Let HIM reveal his raviſhing perfections in my ſoul; and I ſhall not want the ſaffron beauties of the morn, the golden glories of noon, or the impurpled evening-ſky. I ſhall ſigh only for thoſe moſt deſirable and diſtinguiſhed realms, where the light of HIS countenance *perpetually* ſhines, and conſequently "there is ‡ no night there."

How

* Pſal. xci. 11. 12. † Job v. 23. Hoſ. ii. 18.
‡ Rev. xxi. 25.

How ſurpriſing are the alterations of nature! I left her, the preceding evening, plain and unadorned. But, now, a *thick rime* has ſhed its hoary honours over all. It has ſhagged the fleeces of the ſheep, and criſped the traveller's locks. The hedges are richly fringed, and all the ground is profuſely powdered. The downward branches are taſſelled with ſilver, and the upright are feathered with the plumy wave.

The *fine* are not always the *valuable*. The air, amidſt all theſe gaudy decorations, is charged with chilling and *unwholeſome* damps. The raw hazy influence ſpreads wide; ſits deep; hangs heavy and oppreſſive on the ſprings of life. A liſtleſs languor clogs the animal functions, and the purple ſtream glides but faintly through its channels. In vain, the ruler of the day exerts his beaming powers: in vain, he attempts to diſperſe this inſurrection of vapours. The ſullen, malignant cloud refuſes to depart. It envelops the world, and intercepts the *proſpect*. I look abroad for the neighbouring village; I ſend my eye in queſt of the riſing turret; but am ſcarce able to diſcern the very next houſe. Where are the blue arches of heaven? Where is the radiant countenance of the ſun? where the boundleſs ſcenes of creation? Loſt, loſt are their beauties; quenched their glories. The thronged theatre of the univerſe ſeems an empty void; and all its elegant pictures, an undiſtinguiſhed blank.—Thus would it have been with our intellectual views, if the *goſpel* had not come in to our relief. We ſhould have known neither our true good, nor real evil. We had been a riddle to ourſelves; the preſent ſtate all confuſion, and the future impenetrable darkneſs. But the Sun of Righteouſneſs, ariſing with potent and triumphant beams, has diſſipated the interpoſing cloud; has opened a proſpect more beautiful than the bloſſoms of ſpring, more chearing than the treaſures of autumn, and far more enlarged than the extent of the viſible ſyſtem: which, having led the eye of the mind thro'

fields of grace, over rivers of righteouſneſs, and hills crowned with knowledge, terminates, at length, in the heavens; ſweetly loſing itſelf in regions of infinite bliſs, and endleſs glory.

As I walk along the fog, it ſeems, at ſome little diſtance, to be almoſt ſolid gloom; ſuch as would ſhut out every glimpſe of light, and totally impriſon me in obſcurity. But when I approach, and enter it, I find myſelf agreeably miſtaken, and the miſt much *thinner* than it *appeared*.—Such is the caſe with regard to the ſufferings of the preſent life; they are not, when experienced, ſo dreadful as a timorous imagination ſurmiſed. Such alſo is the caſe with reference to the *gratifications* of *ſenſe*; they prove not, when enjoyed, ſo ſubſtantial as a ſanguine expectation repreſented. In both inſtances, we are graciouſly diſappointed. The keen edge of the calamity is blunted, that it may not wound us with incurable anguiſh: the exquiſite reliſh of the proſperity is palled, that it may not captivate our affections, and enſlave them to inferior delights.

SOMETIMES the face of things wears a more pleaſing form; the very reverſe of the foregoing. The ſober evening advances, to cloſe the ſhort-lived day. The firmament, clear and unſullied, puts on its brighteſt blue. The ſtars, in thronging multitudes, and with a peculiar brilliancy, glitter through the fair expanſe. While the *froſt* pours its ſubtile and penetrating influence all around. Sharp and intenſely ſevere, all the the long night, the rigid æther continues its operations. When, late and ſlow, the morning opens her pale eye; in what a curious and amuſing diſguiſe is nature dreſſed! The icicles, jagged and uneven, are pendent on the houſes. A whitiſh film incruſts the windows, where mimic landſcapes riſe, and fancied figures ſwell. The fruitful fields are hardened to iron; the moiſtened meadows are congealed to marble; and

and both reſound (an effect unknown before) with the peaſant's haſty tread. The ſtream is arreſted in its career, and its ever-flowing ſurface chained to the banks. The fluid paths become a ſolid road; where the finny ſhoals were wont to rove, the ſportive youth ſlide, or the rattling chariots roll *. And (what would ſeem, to an inhabitant of the ſouthern world, as unaccountable as the deepeſt myſteries of our religion) that very ſame breath of heaven, which *cements* the lakes into a cryſtal pavement, *cleaves* the oaks as it were with inviſible wedges: "breaks in pieces the "northern iron, and the ſteel;" even while it *builds* a bridge of icy rock over the ſeas †.

The air is all ſerenity. Refined by the nitrous particles, it affords the moſt diſtinct views, and extenſive proſpects. The ſeeds of *infection* are killed; and the *peſtilence* deſtroyed, even in embryo. So, the cold of *affliction* tends to mortify our corruptions, and ſubdue our vitious habits.—The crouding atmoſphere conſtringes our bodies, and braces our nerves. The ſpirits are buoyant, and ſally briſkly on the execution of their office. In the ſummer-months, ſuch an unclouded ſky, and ſo bright a ſun, would have melted us with heat, and ſoftened us into ſupineneſs. We ſhould have been ready to throw our limbs under the ſpreading beech, and to lye at eaſe by the murmuring brook. But now none loiters in his path; none is ſeen with folded arms. All is in motion; all is activity.

Choice,

* *Concreſcunt ſubito currenti in flumine cruſtæ;*
Undaque jam tergo ferratos ſuſtinet orbes,
Puppibus illa prius patulis, nunc hoſpita plauſtris
Æraque diſſiliunt vulgo. VIRG.

† *Job* xxxviii. 30. *The waters are hid*, locked up from the cattle's lips, and ſecured from the fiſher's net, *as* wells were wont to be cloſed with a ponderous and impenetrable *ſtone*. *And* not only lakes and rivers, but *the ſurface of the* great *deep*, with its reſtleſs and uncontrollable ſurges, *is taken captive* יתלכד by the froſt, and bound in ſhining fetters.

Choice, prompted by the weather, ſupplies the ſpur of neceſſity. Thus, the *rugged* ſchool of misfortune often trains up the mind to a vigorous exertion of its faculties. The *bleak* climate of *adverſity* often inſpirits us with a manly reſolution. When a ſoft and downy affluence, perhaps, would have relaxed all the generous ſpring of the ſoul, and have left it enervated with pleaſure, or diſſolved in indolence.

"*COLD* cometh out of the north *." The winds, having ſwept thoſe deſerts of ſnow, arm themſelves with millions of frozen particles, and make a fierce deſcent upon our iſle. Under black and ſcowling clouds, they drive, dreadfully whizzing, thro' the darkened air. They growl around our houſes; aſſault our doors; and, eager for entrance, faſten on our windows. Walls can ſcarce reſtrain them; bars are unable to exclude them; thro' every cranny they force their way. Ice is on their wings; they ſcatter agues thro' the land; and winter, all winter, rages as they go. Their breath is as a ſearing † iron to the little verdure left in the plains. Vaſtly more pernicious to the tender plants than the ſharpeſt knife, they kill their branches, and wound the very root. Let not the corn venture to peep too freely from the entrenchment of the furrow; let not the fruit-bearing bloſſoms dare to come abroad from their lodgment in the bark; leſt theſe murderous blaſts intercept and ſeize the unwary ſtrangers, and deſtroy the hopes of the advancing year.

O, 'tis

* Job xxxvii. 9.

† This, I ſuppoſe, is the meaning of that figurative expreſſion uſed by the prophet *Habakkuk*: who, ſpeaking of the *Chaldeans* invading *Judea*, ſays,—*Their faces*, or the incurſions they make, *ſhall ſup up*, ſhall ſwallow greedily, ſhall devour utterly, the inhabitants of the country, and their valuable effects; *as the* keen, corroding blaſts of the *eaſt wind* deſtroy every green thing in the field. *Hab.* i. 9.

O, 'tis ſeverely cold! Who is ſo hardy, as not to ſhrink at this *exceſſively-pinching* weather? See! Every face is pale. Even the blooming cheeks contract a gelid hue, and the teeth hardly forbear chattering.—Ye that ſit eaſy and joyous, amidſt your commodious apartments, ſolacing yourſelves in the diffuſive warmth of your fire, be mindful of your brethren in the chearleſs tenement of poverty. *Their* ſhattered panes are open to the piercing winds; a tattered garment ſcarcely covers their ſhivering fleſh; while a few faint and dying embers on the ſqualid hearth, rather mock their wiſhes, than warm their limbs.—While the generous juices of *Oporto* ſparkle in your glaſſes; or the ſtreams, beautifully tinged and deliciouſly flavoured with the *Chineſe* leaf, ſmoke in the elegant porcelain; O remember, that many of your fellow-creatures, amidſt all the rigour of theſe inclement ſkies, are emaciated with ſickneſs, benumbed with age, and pining with hunger. Let "their loins bleſs you," for comfortable cloathing. Reſtore them with medicine; regale them with food; and baffle the raging year. So, may you never know any of their diſtreſſes, but only by the hearing of the ear, the ſeeing of the eye, or the feeling of a tender commiſeration!—Methinks, the bitter bluſtering winds plead for the poor indigents. May they breathe pity into *your* breaſts, while they blow hardſhips into *their* huts!—Obſerve thoſe blue flames, and ruddy coals, in your chimney: quickened by the cold, they look more lively, and glow more ſtrongly. Silent, but ſeaſonable admonition to the gay circle, that chat and ſmile around them! *Thus*, may your hearts, at ſuch a juncture of need, kindle into a peculiar benevolence! Detain not your ſuperfluous piles of wood. Let them haſten to the relief of the ſtarving family. Bid them expire in many a willing blaze, to mitigate the ſeverity of the ſeaſon, and chear the bleak abodes of want. So ſhall they aſcend, mingled with thankſgivings to GOD, and ardent

dent prayers for your welfare;—aſcend, more grateful to heaven than columns of the moſt coſtly incenſe.

Now the winds ceaſe. Having brought their load, they are diſmiſſed from ſervice. They have wafted an immenſe cargo of clouds, which empty themſelves in *ſnow*. At firſt, a few ſcattered ſhreds come wandering down the ſaddened ſky. This ſlight ſkirmiſh is ſucceeded by a general onſet. The flakes, large and numerous, and thick-wavering, deſcend. They dim the air, and haſten the approach of night. Through all the night, in ſofteſt ſilence, and with a continual flow, this fleecy ſhower falls. In the morning, when we awake, what a ſurpriſing change appears!—Is this the ſame world? Here is no diverſity of colour! I can hardly diſtinguiſh the trees from the hills on which they grow. Which are the meadows, and which the plains? Where are the green paſtures, and where the fallow lands? All things lye blended in bright confuſion; ſo bright, that it heightens the ſplendor of day, and even dazzles the organs of ſight.—The lawn is not ſo fair, as this ſnowy mantle, which inveſts the fields; and even the lily, was the lily to appear, would look tarniſhed in its preſence. I can think of but *one* thing, which *excels* or equals the glittering robe of winter. Is any perſon deſirous to know my meaning? He may find it explained in that admirable hymn *, compoſed by the royal penitent. Is any deſirous to poſſeſs this matchleſs ornament? He will find it offered to his acceptance in every page of the goſpel.

See! (for the eye cannot ſatisfy itſelf without viewing again and again the curious, the delicate ſcene,) ſee! how the hedges are habited, like ſpotleſs veſtals! The houſes are roofed with uniformity and luſtre. The meadows are covered with a carpet of the fineſt ermine.

* Can any thing be whiter than ſnow? Yes, ſaith *David;* If God be pleaſed to waſh me from my ſins in the blood of Christ, *I ſhall be even whiter than ſnow.* Pſal. li. 7. See page 361, 2.

mine *. The groves bow beneath the lovely burden; and all, all below, is one wide, immenſe, ſhining waſte of white.—By deep ſnows, and heavy rains, GOD *ſealeth up the hand of every man.* And for this purpoſe, adds our ſacred philoſopher, *that all men may know his work* †. He confines them within their doors, and puts a ſtop to their ſecular buſineſs; that they may conſider the things which belong to their ſpiritual welfare; that, having a vacation from their ordinary employ, they may obſerve the works of his power, and become acquainted with the myſteries of his grace.

And worthy, worthy of all obſervation, are the works of the great Creator. They are prodigiouſly various, and perfectly amazing. How pliant and ductile is nature under his forming hand! At his command, the ſelf-ſame ſubſtance aſſumes the moſt different ſhapes, and is transformed into an endleſs multiplicity of figures. If HE ordains, the water is *moulded* into hail, and diſcharged upon the earth like a volley of ſhot; or it is *conſolidated* into ice, and defends the rivers, "as it were with a breaſt-plate." At the bare intimation of his will, the very ſame element is ſcattered in hoar-froſt, like a ſprinkling of the moſt *attenuated* aſhes; or is ſpread over the ſurface of the ground, in theſe couches of ſwelling and *flaky* down.

The ſnow, however it may carry the appearance of cold, affords a *warm* garment for the corn; ſcreens it from nipping froſts, and cheriſhes its infant-growth. It will abide for a while, to exert a protecting care, and exerciſe a foſtering influence. Then, touched by the ſun, or thawed by a ſoftening gale, the furry veſture melts into genial moiſture; ſinks deep into the ſoil, and ſaturates its pores with the diſſolving nitre; repleniſhing

* This animal is milk-white. As for thoſe *black ſpots*, which we generally ſee in linings of ermine, they are added by the furrier, in order to diverſify the appearance, or heighten the beauty, of the native colour. † Job xxxvii. 7.

repleniſhing the glebe with thoſe principles of vegetative life, which will open into the bloom of ſpring, and ripen into the fruits of autumn.—Beautiful emblem this, and comfortable repreſentation of the divine *word*, both in the ſucceisful and advantageous iſſue of its operation! *As the rain cometh down, and the ſnow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give ſeed to the ſower, and bread to the eater: ſo ſhall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth; it ſhall not return unto me void, but ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereunto I ſent it* *.

NATURE, at length, puts off her lucid veil. She drops it in a trickling *thaw*. The looſened ſnow rolls in ſheets from the houſes. Various openings ſpot the hills; which, even while we look, become larger, and more numerous. The trees rid themſelves, by degrees, of the hoary incumberance. Shook from the ſpringing boughs, part falls heavy to the ground, part flies abroad in ſhining atoms. Our fields and gardens, lately buried beneath the drifted heaps, riſe plain and diſtinct to view.—Since we ſee nature once again, has ſhe no verdant traces, no beautiful features, left? They are, like real friends, very rare; and therefore the more particularly to be regarded, the more highly to be valued.—Here and there the *holly* hangs out her glowing berries; the *lauruſtinus* ſpreads her graceful tufts; and both under a covert of unfading foliage.—The plain, but hardy *ivy*, clothes the decrepit, crazy wall; nor ſhrinks from the friendly office, though the ſkies frown, and the ſtorm roars.—The *laurel*, firm, erect, and bold, expands its leaf of vivid green. In ſpite of the united, the repeated attacks of wind, and rain, and froſt, it preſerves an undiſmayed lively look; and maintains its poſt, while withering millions fall around,

* Iſ. lv. 10, 11.

around. Worthy, by vanquishing the rugged force of winter, worthy to adorn the triumphant conqueror's brow.—Nor must I forget the *bay-tree;* which scorns to be a mean pensioner on a few transient sunny gleams; or, with a servile obsequiousness, to vary its appearance, in conformity to the changing seasons: by such indications of sterling worth, and staunch resolution, reading a lecture to the poet's genius, while it weaves the chaplet for his temples.—These, and a few other plants, clad with native verdure, retain their comely aspect, in the bleakest climes, and in the coldest months.

Such, and so durable, are the accomplishments of a *refined* understanding, and an *amiable* temper. The tawdry ornaments of dress, which catch the unthinking vulgar, soon become insipid and despicable. The rubied lip, and the rosy cheek fade. Even the sparkling wit ‡, as well as the sparkling eye, please but for a mo-

‡ "How little does GOD esteem the things that men count "great; the endowments of *wit* and eloquence, that *men* ad- "mire in some! Alas! how poor are they to him! He re- "specteth not any who are wise in heart: they are nothing, "and less than nothing, in his eyes. Even *wise* men admire, "how little it is that men know; how small a matter lyes un- "der the sound of these popular wonders, a learned man, a "great scholar, a great statesman. How much more doth the "all-wise GOD meanly account of these! He often discovers "even to the world, their meanness. He *befools* them. So "valour, or birth, or worldly greatness, these he gives, and "gives us things he makes no great reckoning of, to such as "shall never see his face; and calls to the inheritance of glo- "ry poor despised creatures, that are looked on as the *off- "scourings* and *refuse* of the world."

—*THUS* says an excellent author; who writes with the most amiable spirit of benevolence; with the most unaffected air of humility; and, like the sacred originals, from which he copies, with a majestic simplicity of style.—Whose *select works* I may venture to recommend, not only as a treasure, but as a MINE of genuine, sterling, evangelical piety.—See page 520.

a moment. But the virtuous mind has charms, which ſurvive the decay of every inferior embelliſhment; charms, which add to the fragrancy of the flower, the *permanency* of the *ever-green*.

Such, likewiſe, is the happineſs of the ſincerely-religious; like a tree, ſays the inſpired moraliſt, "whoſe "leaf ſhall not fall." He borrows not his peace from external circumſtances; but has a fund within, and is "ſatisfied from himſelf *." Even though impoveriſhed by calamitous accidents, he is rich in the *poſſeſſion* of *grace*, and richer in the *hope* of *glory*. His joys are infinitely ſuperior to, as well as nobly independent on, the tranſitory glow of ſenſual delight, or the capricious favours of what the world calls fortune.

If the *ſnow* compoſes the light-armed troops of the ſky, methinks the *hail* conſtitutes its heavy artillery †. When driven by a vehement wind, with what dreadful impetuoſity does that ſtony ſhower fall! How it rebounds from the frozen ground, and rattles on the reſounding dome! It attenuates the rivers into ſmoke, or ſcourges them into foam. It cruſhes the infant flowers; cuts in pieces the gardener's early plants; and batters the feeble fortification of his glaſſes into ſhivers. It darts into the traveller's face: he turns, with haſte, from the ſtroke; or feels, on his cheek, for

of Archbiſhop Leighton's *ſelect works*, the *Edinburgh* edition, octavo. Which it is neceſſary to ſpecify, becauſe the *London* edition does not contain that part of his writings which has ſupplied me with the preceding *quotation*.

* Prov. xiv. 14.

† *He caſteth forth his ice like morſels.* Pſal. cxlvii. 17. Which, in modern language, might be thus expreſſed: *He poureth his hail like a volley of ſhot.* The word מרח inadequately tranſlated *morſels*, alludes, I think, to thoſe *fragments* of the rock, or thoſe *ſmooth ſtones* from the brook, which, in the day of battle, the warriors hurled from their ſlings.

for the gushing blood. If he would retreat into the house, it follows him even thither; and, like a determined enemy, that pushes the pursuit, dashes thro' the crackling panes.—But the fierce attack is quickly over. The clouds have soon spent their shafts; soon unstrung their bow. Happy for the inhabitants of the earth, that a sally so dreadfully *furious*, should be so remarkably *short!* What else could endure the shock, or escape destruction?

But behold a *bow*, of no hostile intention! a bow, painted in variegated colours, on the disburdened cloud. How vast is the extent, how delicate the texture, of that *showery arch!* It compasseth the heavens with a glorious circle, and teaches us to forget the horrors of the storm. Elegant its form, and rich its tincture; but more delightful its sacred significancy. While the violet and the rose blush in its beautiful aspect, the olive-branch smiles in its gracious import. It writes, in radiant dyes, what the angels sung in harmonious strains; "peace on earth, and good-will "towards men." It is the stamp of *insurance*, for the continuance of seed-time and harvest; for the preservation and security of the visible world *. It is the comfortable *token* ‡ of a better state, and a happier kingdom;—a kingdom, where sin shall cease, and misery be abolished; where storms shall beat, and winter pierce no more; but holiness, happiness, and joy, like one unbounded *spring*, for ever, ever bloom.

* Gen. ix. 12,—16. ‡ Rev. iv. 3.

An IMITATION of Mr HERVEY'S MEDITATIONS.

Wrote by a young Lady, in 1750.

☞ See above, p. 116, 215.

THE ſhortening days, the ſullen clouds, grown dark and ponderous with the gathering rain; the frigid air, which ſtrikes unwelcome on the tender frame, (but ſhews what *Albion*'s ſons could once endure,) proclaim the approach of winter.—See! how the trees, as tho' they felt a ſhock like human diſſolution, now drop their leafy honours:—ſome, you may obſerve, like feeble old age, hang tottering in the air, till a gentle breeze breaks the tender fibre that ſupports them, and throws them relentleſs on the ground. They fall unlamented, when they can no longer delight our eyes; and are no ſooner diſſolved, than forgot: one ſummer's beauty is all they can pretend to; whilſt the lofty fir, though greatly eclipſed by theſe gay ſtrangers in the bloom of their youth, yet far exceeds them in the duration of her charms. The beauty of the fir is always the ſame, and periſhes only with her exiſtence.

A lively emblem this, of the inſtability and worthleſſneſs of mortal charms.—How mutable is the happineſs of thoſe thoughtleſs women, who place all their felicity in admiration!—Admiration from whom? Not from the wiſe and prudent, that were well worth their aim; but from perſons light and trifling as themſelves: for ſuch alone pay court to poliſhed duſt.—Perhaps, they paſs the bloom of their youth without one ſerious thought; and what a fund of impertinence do they then treaſure up for the remainder of their days!

days! which, when all these gay fantastic visions fade, when every outward charm is fled, grows quite insupportable.—How can they bear the shock of approaching age? which (like autumn by the trees) disrobes them of every attractive grace.—The perfections we are by the flattering world allowed, whilst we have beauty, too often, at least the praise of them, vanish with it, and leave nothing but malice and envy to fill up the great void of uncultivated sense:—they drop like the withered leaves, neglected, if not despised; and, like the path of a swift arrow thro' the invisible air, leave no traces of virtue or goodness, whereby they may be remembered.—How much happier they, who, in the midst of their childish, innocent amusements, experience the effects of a true parental care; who are taught "to remember their Creator in the "days of their youth, while the evil days come not, "and the years wherein they shall (truly) say, I have "no pleasure in them;" and are early informed, (before the trifling joys of this world have made too deep an impression on their tender minds,) that all is vanity; that religion, wisdom, and virtue, are the only permanent enjoyments in this world, and will be their only consolation when they sink into another. Beauty is no farther of advantage to us than as it is an embellishment to sense, and makes virtue appear more amiable: but when it is only a mask to vice or folly; when it persuades the owner to neglect the attainment of all other accomplishments, the blessing then degenerates into a curse, and we quickly despise the idle flatterer; in short, "the praise that is worth ambition, "is attained by good sense alone, with dignity of mind;" and a woman of true sense will be always ambitious, —not of gaining admiration, but of deserving it.

I must own myself obliged to Mr *Hervey*'s *Meditations*, for this poor imitation of him. The two volumes published under that title, cannot, I think, be sufficiently

ſufficiently admired: His *Reflections* are ſo eaſy and natural, that, upon reading them, you cannot help being ſurpriſed, that the objects which furniſhed him with thoſe beautiful ideas, did not in the ſame manner affect you upon the like occaſions, till you conſider the dignity of ſtyle in which they are wrote:—You are then immediately convinced, that this is only to be attained by a bright underſtanding, refined by a liberal education.—I can't, for my own part, conceive any thing (in this world) to be more thoroughly conducive to happineſs than ſuch a genius, where every object round him raiſes his admiration, and excites his thankfulneſs to that Being, whoſe bleſſings he only truly enjoys, who PROPERLY eſteems them; there is nothing ſuch a one beholds, but what he can apply to the good of himſelf, and of his fellow-creatures.

TABLE

OF THE

TEXTS

More or *leſs* illuſtrated in this WORK.

N. B. *As Dr* SHAW, *in the ſupplement to his* excellent *book of Travels, and ſeveral other authors of the* greateſt *eminence, have given an index of Scriptures, occaſionally explained in their writings; I doubt not, but I ſhall oblige* many *of my readers, by what I* here *ſubjoin: thoſe eſpecially, whoſe taſte is happily formed to reliſh the beauties of the ſacred records.*

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